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9

Rum
Drinks
PAGE 30

PERFECT PIES AT HOME
CRISP ITALIAN PIZZA

PAGE 38



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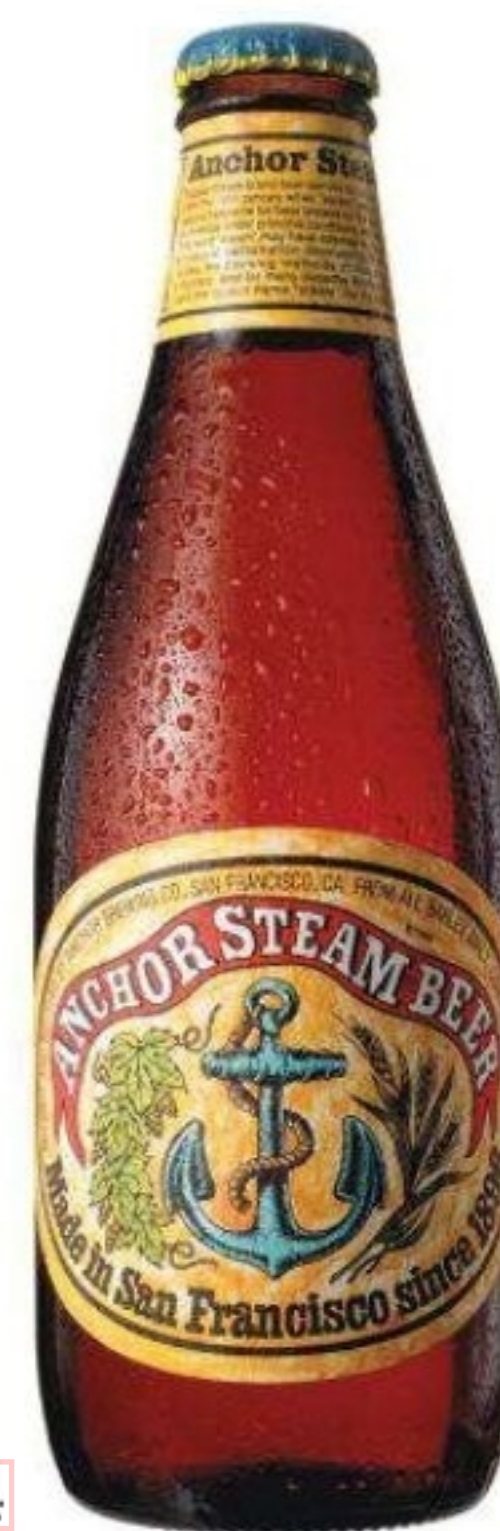
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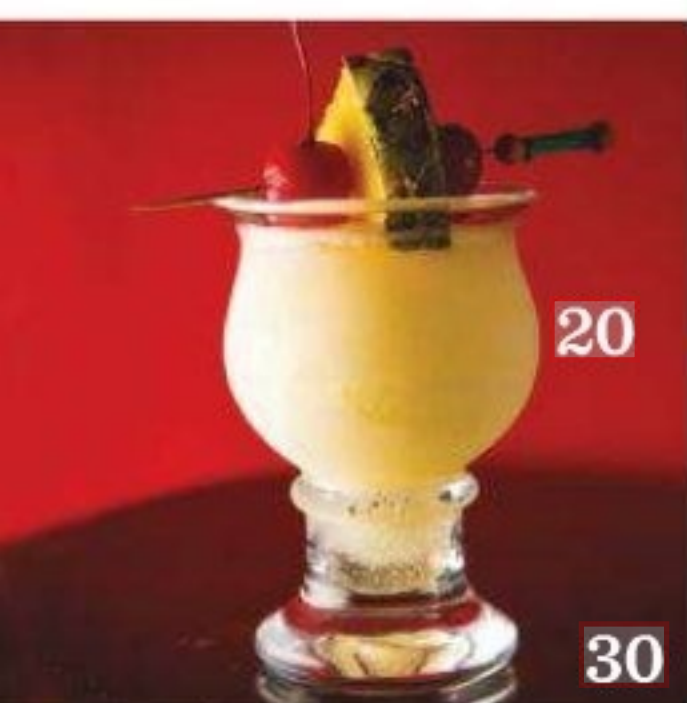
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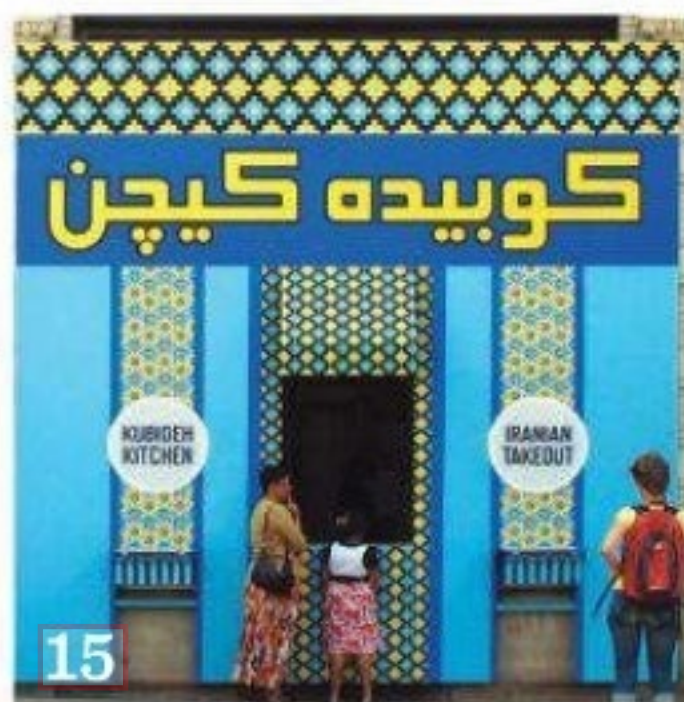
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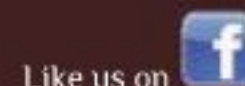
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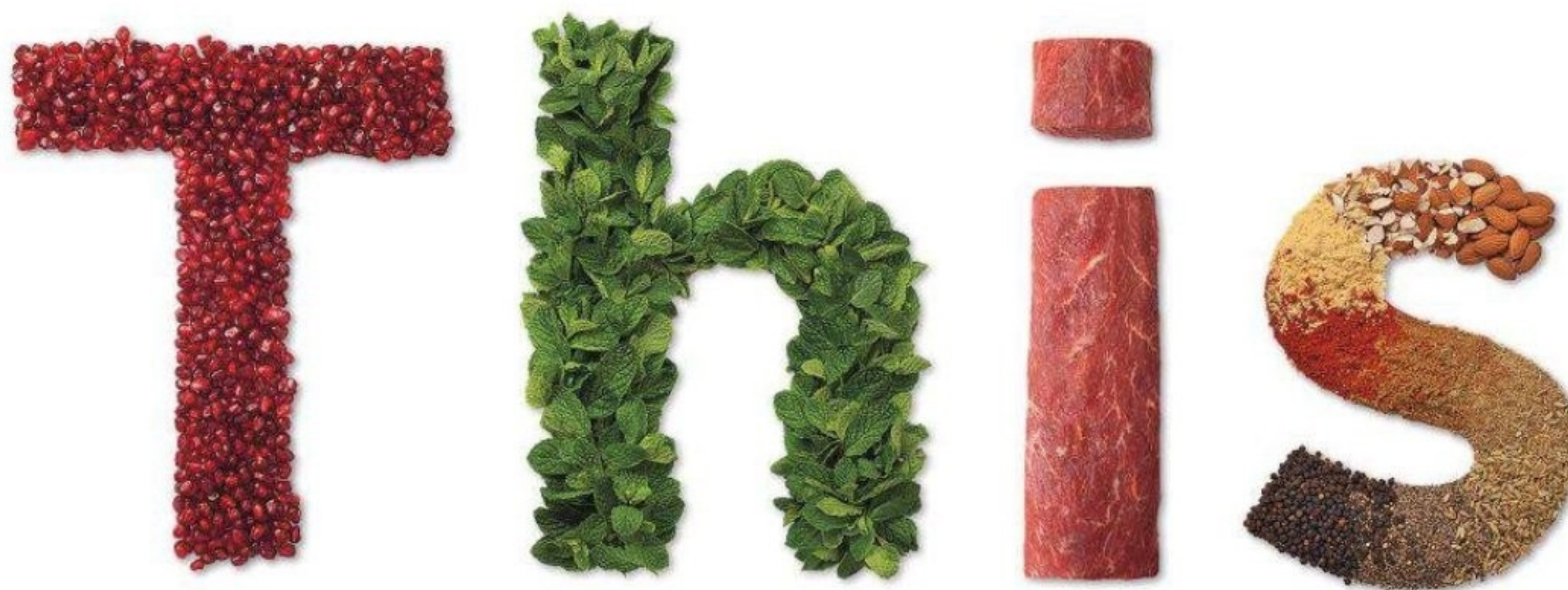


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FIRST



The Italian Job

Learning the ropes of food writing abroad

ABOUT A MONTH after I started working at *SAVEUR*, an e-mail went out to the staff regarding a story on Neapolitan pizza slated for May. A writer had yet to be assigned; we needed one fast. As I searched my memory for suitable candidates, one kept popping up—me. Taking a chance, I typed: “As a person of Neapolitan heritage who’s been dying to return to Naples, I would love to go.” Moments later I got the response I was hoping for from executive editor Betsy Andrews. “You’re on, man.”

I was excited. Very excited. My mom’s family comes from Naples. And the best pizzas I’ve ever tasted were the ones I devoured there while backpacking through Italy in my 20s. Still, just moments after landing the assignment, my excitement gave way to an unexpected feeling of, well, fear.

This, after all, would be my first feature story for a magazine I’d been in awe of for ages. There were giant shoes to fill, most of all those of my coworkers, who had written and edited so many of the beautiful articles I’d read as a subscriber. A lot of questions remained unanswered, too. With my limited grasp of Italian, who would translate? How would I navigate a city that, from what I recalled, could be so chaotic? Who would tell me where to go?

Lucky for me I didn’t embark on this journey alone. Executive food editor Todd Coleman, a man as familiar with traveling abroad as I am with the New York City subway system, came along, providing remarkable photography for the article (“The Gold of Naples,” [page 38](#)). Todd, who’s also written some spectacular stories, showed me the ropes of reporting overseas, the key lessons being to overcome jet lag quickly, hit the ground running, and maintain a tight itinerary while allowing for unexpected discoveries. It was hard keeping up with him, but I did my best, fueled on pizza, espresso, and, once the day was done, a Peroni or two.

Of course, both Todd and I would have been lost without Roberto Caporuscio. A native of Campania who trained in Naples’ famous pizzerias and now owns two of his own (Kesté and Don Antonio by Starita in Manhattan), Roberto provided excellent translation and introduced us to enough pizzerias to write a book. In the end, thanks to these two guys, everything came together. Sometimes, it seems, chances are worth taking. —*KEITH PANDOLFI, Senior Editor*

Diners gather over Naples’ favorite dish at Pizzeria Starita, a 112-year-old pizzeria.

Easy Does It When it comes to making a meal, often you just want the basics—the best enchiladas, foolproof spaghetti *alla carbonara*, crowd-pleasing tacos. That’s why *SAVEUR* has published *Easy Italian* and *Easy Mexican* (Weldon Owen, 2013), two new paperbacks based on our popular iPad books with ingredients, glossaries, and more. Sometimes quick and simple hits the spot.

TODD COLEMAN (2)



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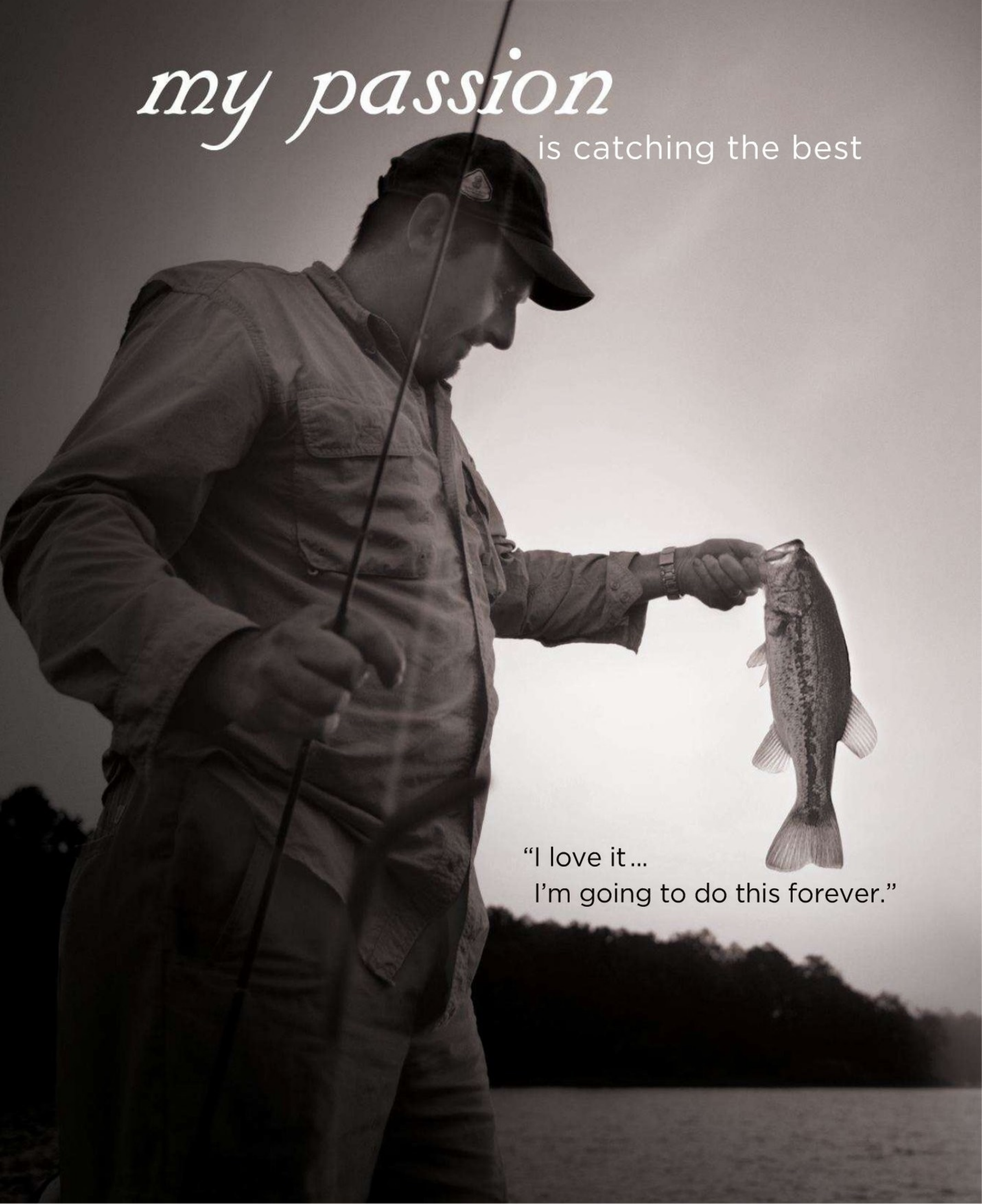


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my passion

is catching the best



"I love it...
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REAL LIFE, REAL FLAVOR WITH CHEF DONALD LINK

CHEF AND OWNER OF THREE AWARD-WINNING RESTAURANTS IN NEW ORLEANS: HERBSAINT, COCHON AND COCHON BUTCHER, AND HIS NEWEST ENDEAVOR, PÊCHE SEAFOOD GRILL

Famous for: Bringing national attention back to Cajun Cooking.

Recent accomplishments: Herbsaint earned him a James Beard Foundation award in 2007 for Best Chef: South. In 2012, and again this year, Link was nominated by the James Beard Foundation for the prestigious award of Outstanding Chef. His first cookbook, *Real Cajun*, won the top James Beard Foundation award for Best American Cookbook.

Inspiration: "After attending culinary school in California, I worked with Albert Tordjman at the Flying Saucer in San Francisco. He was a maniac and an amazing cook. Working with him, I realized there was a future in cooking for me."

First experience with Louisiana Seafood: Going shrimping, crabbing, and fishing with my dad and grandfather.

Loves Louisiana Seafood because: "Its diversity, depth and sweetness."

Where he catches Louisiana Seafood: "The Toledo Bend Reservoir for freshwater fish, and the waters near Port Sulphur and Pointe à la Hache for redfish and drum."

Favorite memory: "Coming back from a morning of bass fishing and smelling the bacon my mother was cooking as we drove up to the camp."

Kid stuff: "Helping my daughter catch her first 'bull red' on Lake Hermitage is one of my favorite moments."



my seafood
is Louisiana



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Grilled Louisiana Drum
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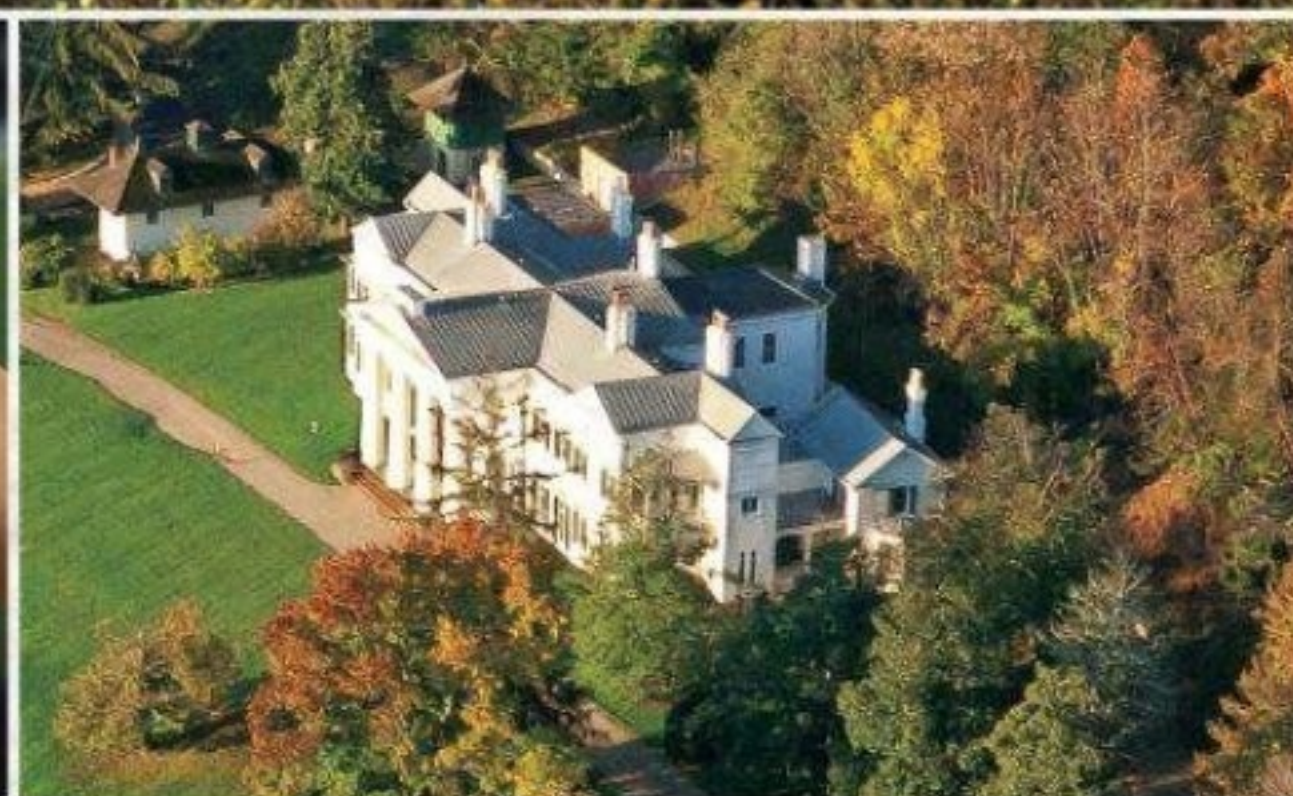
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FARE

Memories and Meditations from the World of Food, Plus Agenda and More

PLYLEY'S These long-lasting hard candies date back to 1919, when Milo and Rilla Plyley first opened their candy store in LaGrange, Indiana. The individually wrapped cylinders still come in classic flavors such as butterscotch, sassafras, grape, and cream soda, but now the company is run by the Plyleys' great-grandson Jack. plyleyscandies.com

TORIE & HOWARD This Connecticut confectioner's pear-and-cinnamon-flavored candy tastes just like the real thing. It's made with organic sugar and rice syrup, and colors come courtesy of red cabbage, purple carrot, and black currant dyes. torieandhoward.com

A POCKET FULL OF SWEETS Barley water imparts a caramel hue to these star-shaped, burned-sugar-flavored sweets from Florida candymaker Doina Taylor. The taste is reminiscent of crème brûlée. etsy.com/shop/APocketFullOfSweets

GIAMBRI'S A delicious hard candy shell gives way to a creamy peanut butter filling in these addictive puffs from New Jersey's Giambri's Quality Sweets, founded in 1942. giambri.com

SCHIMPPFF'S CONFECTIONERY At their family-owned Jeffersonville, Indiana, candy store, opened in 1891, Warren and Jill Schimpff use brass molds to churn out candy fish that represent the aquatic denizens of the Ohio River in mouth-pleasing flavors such as sweet birch and clove. schimpffs.com

PAPABUBBLE Artfully designed, hand-rolled sweets from this "candy laboratory," with locations worldwide, have tiny images—strawberries, hearts, flowers—rolled into their centers. Along with looking pretty, the candies put taste buds into overdrive with bold flavors ranging from salty licorice to watermelon with salt and chile. papabubblenyc.com

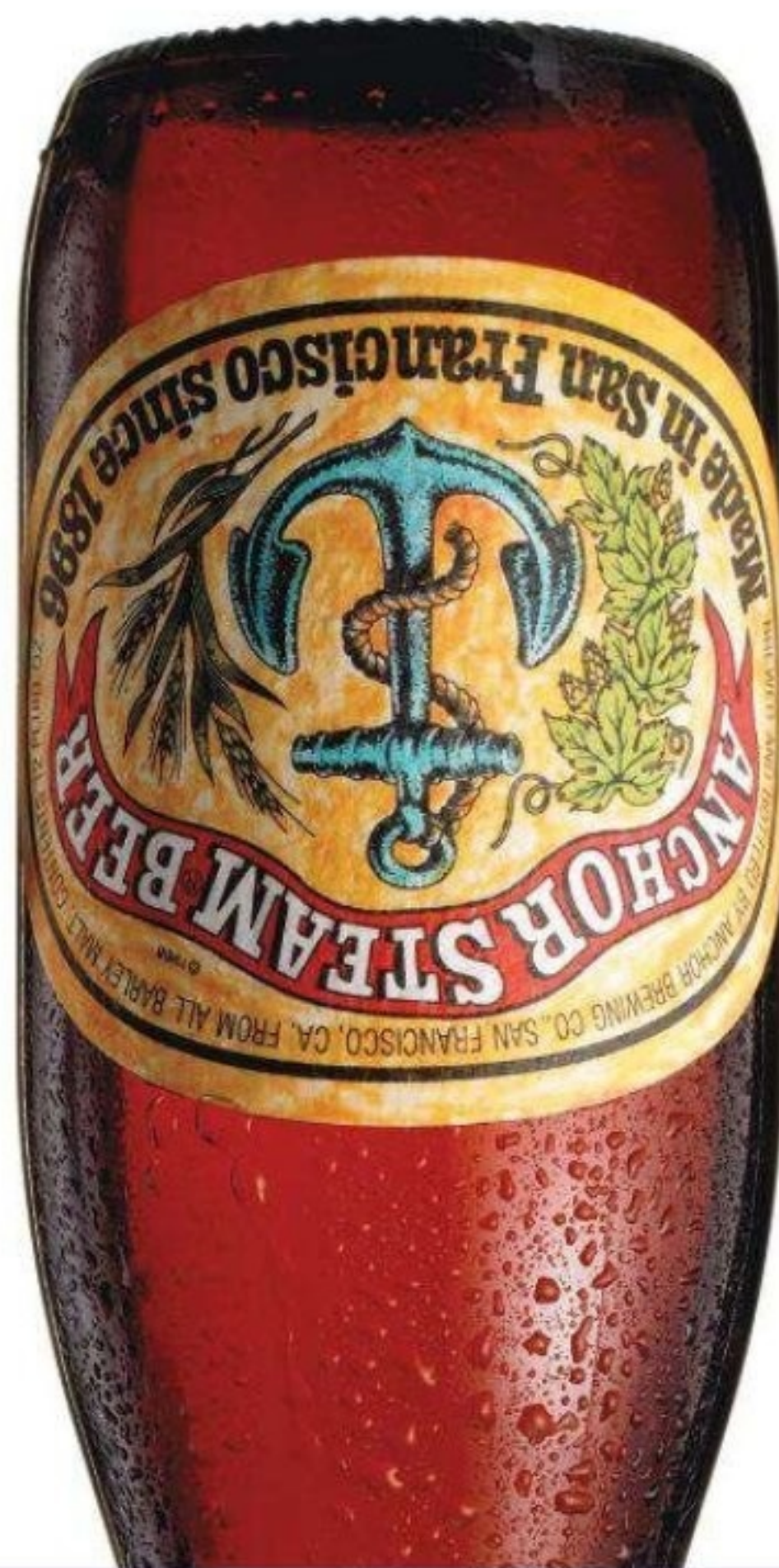
BROOKLYN HARD CANDY Started by two sweet-toothed graduates of London's Cordon Bleu cooking school, these hand-crafted pillow-shaped candies stand out with sophisticated fruity flavors that include tangy wild strawberry, Meyer lemon, and luscious Concord grape. brooklynhardcandy.com

Sweet and Simple

MY FAVORITE THING ABOUT visiting my Aunt Tosca's Springfield, Massachusetts, house with my parents in the 1970s was the glass candy dish she kept on her coffee table. That dish was always filled with an assortment of hard candies: root beer barrels, red hots, butterscotches. I would discreetly dip my hand into it as the adults caught up on family matters. I've never lost my love for hard candies, those jewel-like confections that usually amount to little more than

sugar, water, coloring, and corn syrup. The ingredients are cooked to a taffy-like consistency in a kettle, poured onto a cooling table, mixed with flavoring, then run into molds of all shapes and sizes. Thankfully, there are plenty of producers, from the old-fashioned to the new and artisanal, making great versions of hard candy these days—so many that I've been thinking of copying Aunt Tosca and getting a candy dish of my own. —Keith Pandolfi

Lucky Hand Cali Common: Spicy German hops, Munich malt, and effervescent carbonation yield a mildly bitter and lively California Common-style beer that happens to be certified organic.



Linden Street The 'Town Lager: A crisp, toasty hybrid with an herbaceous finish, this beer is not sold in bottles and is only available at bars within the Oakland city limits. My favorite place to have one is at the English-style CommonWealth pub in the KoNo neighborhood.



As I settle onto a bar stool at Vesuvio Cafe in San Francisco's North Beach neighborhood, the bartender pours me just what I've come here for: a perfect pint of Anchor Steam beer. It's brilliantly clear, deep amber in color, and capped by a bone-white head of foam. Savoring its crystalline-sugar sweetness, all I can think is how far this beer has come.

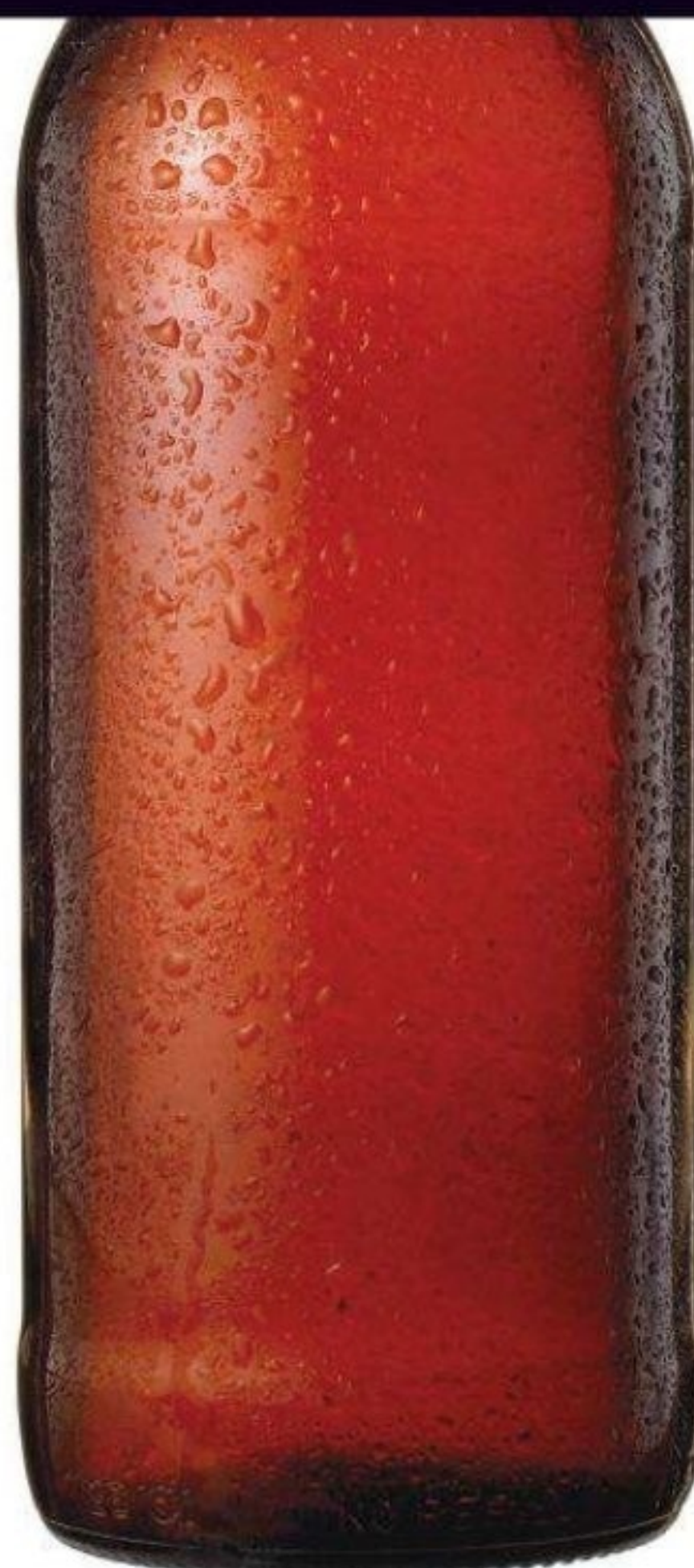
Steam beer traces its lineage back to the frontier brewing conditions of late 19th-century San Francisco. Back then, efforts to re-create the popular pale lagers of Europe—which required cool temperatures to ferment—were hampered by the city's lack of affordable refrigeration. The solution was to brew a beer with lager yeasts at warmer temperatures, often associated with ales. The “steam” moniker is said to have come from the hissing of kegs filled with the brew, which bubbled with CO₂ produced by the overheated lager yeast. The taste was often sour. Still, nickel schooners of steam beer were a welcome option

GOOD AND STEAMED

The curious soul of San Francisco's steam beer



Anchor Steam Beer: The modern-day archetype, Anchor Steam ties minty Northern Brewer hops to a deft backing of pale and caramel malts with a subtle, refreshing fruitiness.

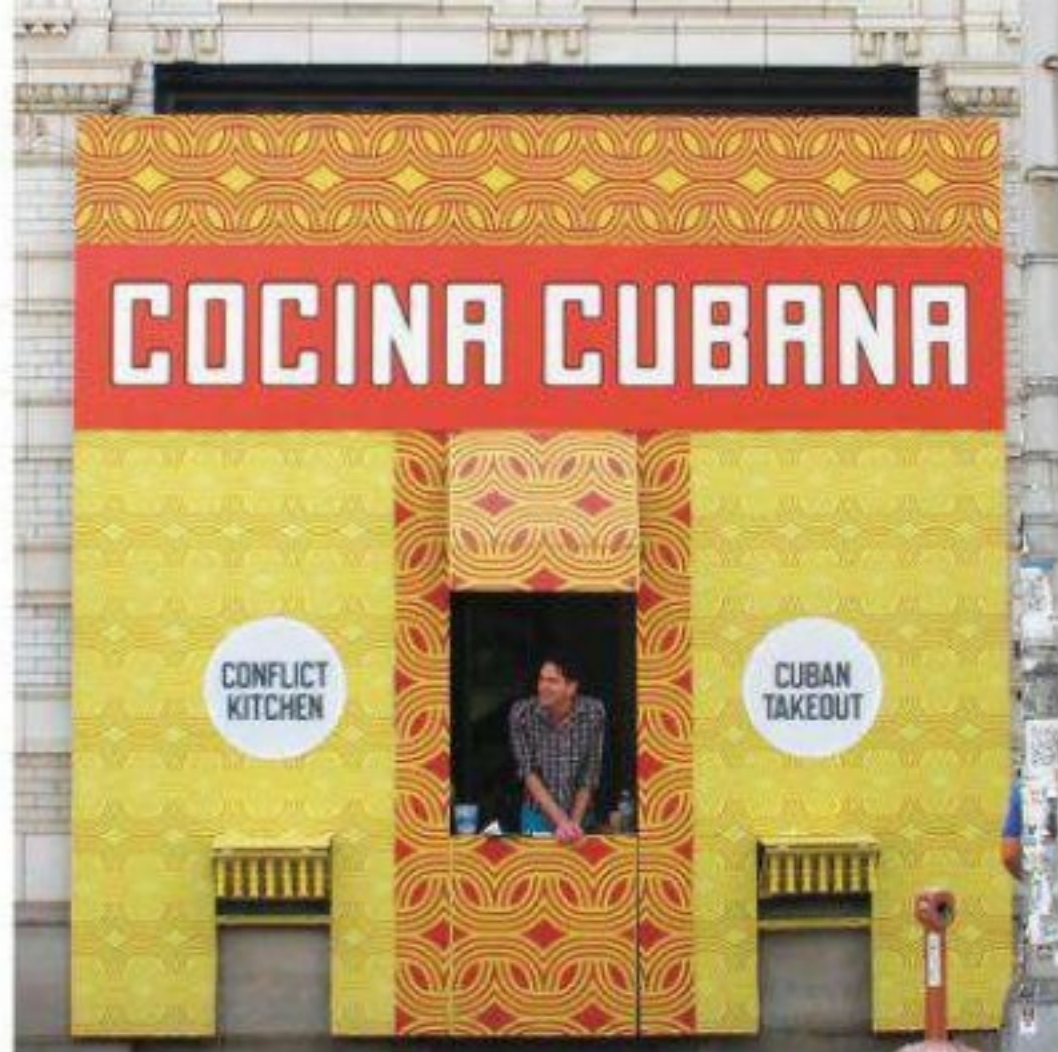


for San Francisco's laboring class.

As brewing technologies evolved, steam beer became an anachronism. In 1965, the last company making it, Anchor Brewing Company, was near bankruptcy when it was bought by Fritz Maytag. The washing machine heir overhauled Anchor's formula, replacing adjunct sugar and rice malts with pure barley malts, improving quality control, and buying only the choicest hops. Anchor eventually trademarked the term “steam beer,” but its essence lives on under the sobriquet “California Common.” Lucky Hand Brewing Company in Novato, California, makes a slightly spicy Common that's one of my favorites, while Oakland's Linden Street Brewery bases its entire lineup on steam-brewing techniques, calling them Old California Style Lagers. “This is a beer style that was born right here in America,” founder Adam Lamoreaux says. “We only have a couple of those.” —Ken Weaver

San Francisco beer drinkers pose with a tapped keg in 1895.

FROM LEFT: MICHAEL KRAUS (3), UNDERWOOD ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES



Inside, Looking Out

An imaginative restaurant brings the world to Pittsburgh

GENERALLY, YOU DON'T SEE MUCH Farsi in Pittsburgh. So the façade that marks the take-out restaurant Conflict Kitchen—candy-colored, kaleidoscopic, emblazoned in foreign script—seems like a portal to another land. And, in a way, it is. Every six months the three-year-old restaurant, located in the city's Oakland neighborhood, regenerates itself to highlight a delicious sandwich or dish from a country with which the United States happens to be in conflict. The current outpost, Kubideh Kitchen, serves a tender Iranian spiced beef sandwich, while previous iterations explored Afghanistan (*bolani*, turnovers with pumpkin filling) and Cuba (mojo-marinated roast pork). Each reinvention is marked by a new look and food wrappers featuring interviews with citizens and émigrés on subjects ranging from Iranian poetry to the treatment of women in Afghanistan. Wanting to promote political discourse, as well as some ethnic cuisines that are difficult to track down in Pittsburgh, co-founders and artists Jon Rubin and Dawn Weleski, along with chef Robert Sayre, a veteran of some of the city's best restaurants, hope Conflict Kitchen serves as a culinary emissary, and an impetus for conversations like the one about food and prayer Rubin overheard between Buddhist and Muslim customers eating Afghan *bolani* last year. Such food-fueled dialogue, Rubin says, "is an amazingly simple thing, but it's still rare." —Courtney Balestier

Pittsburgh's Conflict Kitchen has served the cuisines of (clockwise from top left) Cuba, Afghanistan, Venezuela, and Iran. A future iteration will serve North Korean food.

Love Stack

Soon after my family and I left Russia and moved to Brooklyn in 1990, my language arts teacher asked our sixth-grade class to practice writing instructions. When I went to my mom for advice, she suggested a recipe for *syrniki*, literally "little cheeses." These tangy, tender pancakes made with *tvorog* (a type of quark), sugar, eggs, and flour were a staple of my childhood in St. Petersburg, where Mom would make them in our cozy kitchen on frigid winter mornings. I was excited to write my own recipe—even more so when Mom suggested we make some pancakes for the class. The day the assignment was due, I proudly marched in with my *syrniki* on a dish, where they sat untouched—too strange, I suppose, when compared with American flapjacks. Finally, a few minutes before the bell rang, a girl named Amy walked over to them and popped one

into her mouth. As she chewed, her face broke into a smile. My *syrniki* had earned their first American fan, and I had made my first American friend. —Katia Bachko

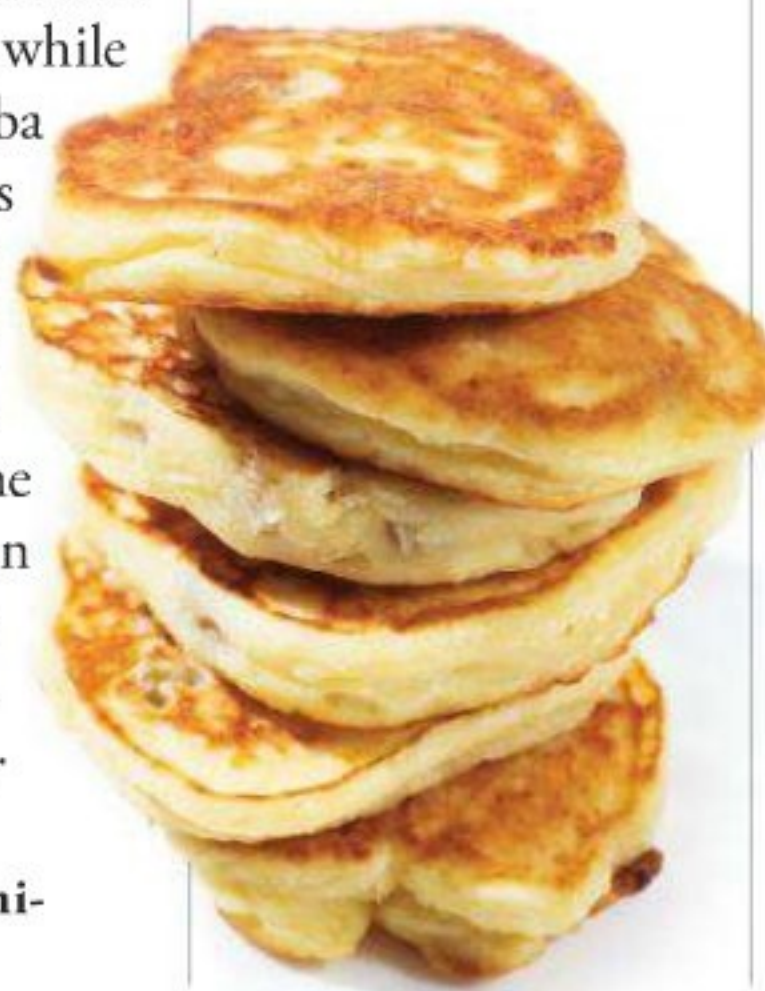
★ Syrniki

(Russian Sweet Cheese Pancakes)

MAKES 30 PANCAKES
Home cook Yelena Bachko, the author's mother, gave us the recipe for these sweet pancakes (pictured below).

- 2 1/2 lb. whole milk ricotta, drained in a sieve overnight**
- 1 1/2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice**
- 1/3 cup sugar**
- 3 eggs, lightly beaten**
- 2/3 cup golden raisins**
- 2 cups all-purpose flour**
- 1/4 cup olive oil, for brushing**

Mix ricotta and lemon juice in a bowl; set aside 5 minutes. In another bowl, whisk sugar and eggs until fluffy; stir in ricotta mixture and raisins. Slowly stir in 1 cup flour until a sticky dough forms; set aside. Place remaining flour on a plate. Using wet hands, form dough into thirty 2" patties about 1/2" thick. Heat a 12" non-stick skillet over medium heat. Working in 4 batches, brush skillet with 1 tbsp. oil each time. Dredge rounds lightly in flour; fry, flipping once, until golden brown and firm, 4–6 minutes.



BRETT YASKO (CONFLICT KITCHEN GRAPHIC DESIGN); TODD COLEMAN. ILLUSTRATION: SCOTT MENCHIN



Food for Thought

"We live very simply—but with all the essentials of life well understood and well provided for—hot baths, cold Champagne, new peas and old brandy." —WINSTON CHURCHILL



A wall of painted faux beadboard running behind the sink reflects the sort of thing that Frank has learned to do almost effortlessly in his work. "It was all stuff that rolled off the brush. No fuss."

Wood countertops evoke the rustic summer kitchens Frank remembers seeing in Buffalo when he was a child.

Though he'd never made furniture before, Frank crafted the two large dining tables that can seat a crowd of holiday and dinner party guests.

"We just bought the simplest restaurant-quality stove we could find in the kitchen-supply stores on the Bowery," Frank says of his sophisticated Vulcan range.



I Love My Kitchen Because

Artists' Retreat

The kitchen of one creative New York couple captures the look of a bygone era

With its austere color scheme and warm wood surfaces, the kitchen my friend Franklin Tartaglione, far left, shares with his partner, the novelist Dave King, gets its inspiration from two separate places. One is the subterranean summer kitchens where Frank and his relatives would spend warm summer evenings while he was growing up in Buffalo; the other, the Catholic school where he attended Monday catechism classes.

But more than anything else, this kitchen, which Frank designed and built in a converted wool combing mill, is also a testament to his tremendous talents as a professional decorative painter. He has spent the past few decades adorning homes and apartments with murals evoking Blue Willow pottery, exotic paradises, and 18th-century French landscapes.

Frank used those talents to create what is perhaps this kitchen's most striking and dramatic aspect: the floor. While designing the house, located near Ghent, New York, he and Dave agreed on vintage linoleum underfoot. Unfortunately, the pattern they had their hearts set on turned out to be discontinued. And so, while Dave was away one weekend, Frank came up with an alternate plan, painting the wooden subfloor a pale raspberry red and tan checkerboard pattern to suggest a

linoleum surface naturally faded by gentle light, generations of foot traffic, and the effects of time.

The kitchen's theatrical and evocative stage-set look (in certain lights, you can see it serving as the backdrop for a production of an Arthur Miller play) is also enhanced by the old-fashioned metal radiators and exposed copper pipes that Frank and Dave bought and installed themselves, by the rustic butcher block counters and wooden cabinets, as well as by the two small bathrooms (the original men's and women's factory washrooms complete with their original stalls) leading off the main space.

Though characteristically modest about his skills as a chef—much of them learned while working the short-order station at his father's Buffalo restaurant (“I know how to have seven or eight egg orders going at once”)—Frank is a superb cook. His delicious roasts and pastas seem to enhance, and be enhanced by, the kitchen's décor, which channels history without self-consciousness, nostalgia without kitsch.

It's a magical experience to gather with friends for dinner in Frank and Dave's kitchen. You can almost hear the soft murmuring gossip of Frank's Buffalo relatives, and the buzzing of June bugs against the screen, even in the dead of winter.

—Francine Prose

AGENDA

May 2013

May

16

Anniversary

CANADA DRY GINGER ALE TRADEMARKED

1922, Toronto

Toronto pharmacist John J. McLaughlin developed the formula for his ubiquitous pale ginger ale in 1904. But it didn't take off until 1919, when he started shipping it to New York City. It was trademarked three years later. In the midst of Prohibition, fans found the not-too-sweet soda a perfect mixer for harsh bootleg hooch.

May

5-6

BAKER CREEK HEIRLOOM SEED PLANTING FESTIVAL

Mansfield, Missouri

Each spring, Jere and Emilee Gettle, publishers of the Baker Creek Heirloom



Seed catalog, host this festival in the re-created 19th-century village that houses their heirloom seed store. You can buy seedlings for sweet American Purple Top rutabagas and Amish paste tomatoes, perfect for puréeing; listen to lectures by food historians; and gorge on molasses cowboy beans, organic beef barbecued ribs, and other favorites sold by hawkers. Info: rareseeds.com/festivals

May

15

PAHIYAS FESTIVAL

Lucban, Philippines

To honor San Isidro Labrador, the patron saint of farmers, residents of Lucban turn their houses into vibrant works of edible art, the exteriors decorated with fruits, vegetables, and *kiping* (rice wafers) dyed in bright colors. View their efforts while eating local street foods like *pilpit*, a donut-like treat made from squash, rice, and sugar. Info: pahiyasfestival.com

May

16-19



NOOSA INTERNATIONAL FOOD & WINE FESTIVAL

Noosa, Australia

Along with tours of this waterfront town's spice farms, farmers' markets, and vineyards, this festival offers beachside seafood lunches of succulent local oysters, octopus and prawns, plus a chance to sample 200 wines from 40 Australian wineries. Info: noosafoodandwine.com.au

THE PANTRY, [page 84](#): for information on ordering steam beers and more.

The Conversation

THE FIXER

It happens all the time. We're developing a recipe in our test kitchen, and someone yells, "Hey, I need some galangal root, stat!" That's when we put in a call to Melissa's, the largest distributor of specialty produce in the U.S. Bill Gerlach, Melissa's director of research and development, tells us what it takes to ensure that when we need something obscure, even if it's halfway around the world, it will arrive in midtown Manhattan within days. —Sophie Brickman

What do you do?

I look for new produce, thinking five to ten years ahead of time. We use our own internal prognostications of what the market is going to be like to target our search. About a quarter of the time, I'm traveling. There's no substitute for going and seeing a grower's farm.

What's the travel schedule like for, say, a baby pineapple?

They are grown in South Africa, then fly through Heathrow to LAX. They arrive in our warehouse one to two days after being picked. You know what's great about a baby pineapple? You can eat the core. I've seen people in Africa peel them and eat them like Popsicles, holding on to the fronds like sticks.

Do you get panicked 3 A.M. calls from the border?

We have people from Melissa's working on-site, on the docks and the borders, and, sure, if there are quarantines or product holds, they'll phone us in the middle of the night. It's a courtesy we provide. We might have customers depending on that shipment.

Anything new on the horizon?

I'm always working on procuring new tropical fruits and other exotic things. As far as what to look forward to this spring, I'd be excited for white apricots—we call them Angelcots because they have an angel-food flavor. They're really juicy and fragrant.

What produce items do you wish were available in the U.S. that aren't?

Some great tropical fruits bruise easily. Açaí [a tart berry from South America] will almost melt before a person's eyes. That's probably why the USDA hasn't cleared it for import.

Ever smuggled any in?

Absolutely not! In fact, even when I get dried samples of products, which are legal to bring in, I dutifully go through the USDA line at the airport knowing full well it's going to slow me up. I do it to make a point. I've even complimented the officials there, saying, "Oh, wow, you have a really important job, and we thank you for protecting our agriculture!" One lady gave me a look, then said, "Just take your luggage and get out of here."

passionate about potatoes

THE RECIPE

Idaho® Peruvian Potato Cakes

4 lbs Idaho® Purple Peruvian
Potatoes

5 Egg Yolks

1 C Parmesan Cheese

¼ C Heavy Cream

Herbs, Black Pepper, Salt

THE CHEF

Scott Gottlich

Executive Chef

The Second Floor Bistro &
Bar at The Westin Galleria
Dallas, TX

His bi-coastal experience
at multi-star restaurants
prepared Chef Gottlich
to put his sophisticated
spin on contemporary
comfort food.

THE PASSION

Idaho® Purple Peruvian
Potatoes bring dramatic
visual appeal to these tasty
potato cake sides. Double
breaded for a crispy
outside and a light, creamy
texture inside.

For this and other unique
Idaho® Potato recipes, visit
us on the Web.



IDAHOPOTATO.COM/FSPRO

 / FamousIdahoPotatoes

 @idahopotato

Slice of a Lifetime I'd always thought of French mandolines, those precision slicing tools, as torture devices—bulky and burdensome with poor-quality blades quick to dull or rust. Their moveable parts made them hard, and even dangerous, to clean. I had all but given up on mandolines when I found the Kyocera Slicer. Beautifully simple with no moving parts, it's basically a lightweight, easy-to-wash plastic board with a comfy, slightly angled handle. Best of all, its double-sided ceramic blade lets you slice your carrots, potatoes, or cucumbers in both forward and backward motions, and is immune to rust and dulling. (\$25; kyoceraadvancedceramics.com) —Todd Coleman



Digital Feast

Lucy Knisely's graphic memoir, *Relish: My Life in the Kitchen* (First Second, 2013), is a sweet account of the author's experiences growing up and finding her way in the food world in which she's been immersed since day one: Her mom worked the cheese counter at Dean & DeLuca while pregnant, and Knisely teathed on *profiteroles* and cream-poached salmon as a tot. A bright figure in indie comics, Knisely brings her talent for showing and telling to this well-crafted volume of stories about working at her mother's catering company, an adolescent discovery of Mexican food, experiences on the job at a Chicago gourmet shop, and struggles with her gourmand parents over a love of McDonald's. Each chapter has illustrated recipes for crowd-pleasers such as *huevos rancheros* and her mom's *pesto*. —Helen Rosner



EARTHY DELIGHTS

Growing up in Germany, I looked forward to the spring *spargel* harvest. That's when delicate stalks of the white asparagus that grows throughout western Europe (and gets its ghostly pallor from a covering of dirt that prevents photosynthesis) would turn up everywhere from roadside stands to restaurants. Some would offer it puréed in creamy soups or marinated in salads. But the preparation I liked best was served in the dining room at our village's guest house, where it was blanched and doused in brown butter and lemon. I remember well its earthy, nutty flavor, and the crisp crunch of each ivory-colored spear. These days, in the States, I search my local farmers' market for *spargel* from April through June, when it's in season, hoping to find a stalk or two so I can relive the pleasures of those childhood meals. —Todd Coleman



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Urban Grapes

Northern Europe's most intriguing wine is city-grown

BY JOE APPEL

IN COLLEGE, I read about fin de siècle Vienna and fell in love with the city from afar. I took Viennese modernists as my heroes and became enamored of their ideas: Arnold Schoenberg embraced musical dissonance; Sigmund Freud asked the individual to reject no aspect of himself, no matter how crude, in striving for self-insight. Experimental yet informed by ancient urges, a friend to nature but committed to a built future, their modern man was a complicated blend of the old and the new.

Not far into this century, the pretensions of my youth having settled their aging sights on food and wine, I finally made it to Vienna myself. There, I found unique wines that embody the same complexities I had

cherished in Viennese art and culture.

On an autumn afternoon, I sat with Elke Hajszan on a bench at Weingut Hajszan Neumann, the winery she helps her husband Stefan run, gazing down from the vine-covered Nussberg slopes onto the city 500 feet below. I felt far from the urban hustle and, also, a part of it. Alongside cured meats, pickles, and the delicious cheese spread called Liptauer from the Hajszans' *heurige*, or winery tavern, Elke introduced me to Vienna gemischter satz wine, an intriguing white blend.

For most of the world's blends, the wines from each grape are made separately and blended afterwards for the final product. But gemischter satz, meaning "mixed set," is a true field blend, made from myriad grape varieties that are grown, harvested, crushed, and fermented together to make one wine.

It's a tradition that dates back at

least to Roman times, when grapevines grew together on family farms. Whereas other cities gradually lost vineyards as they urbanized, an 18th-century decree stipulated that Vienna's crazy-quilt winemaking districts were to remain in perpetuity. Most of the more than 300 vintners within Vienna city limits make gemischter satz, and they treat it as their greatest asset.

"Gemischter satz is like a Wall Street portfolio," according to Gerhard Lobner, managing director at Vienna's Rotes Haus and Mayer Am Pfarrplatz wineries. "You want to diversify." This is because grapes have variety-specific responses to weather conditions; if one variety does poorly, the blend can be adjusted so that others compensate. "Some years there's early frost, some years hail," Lobner told me. "It's a way of preserving your worth."

It's also a delicious expression of the complex personalities of Vienna's vineyards, each of which yields a different blend. Peppery grüner veltliner, tantalizingly aromatic riesling, taut chardonnay, spicy neuburger, citrusy silvaner, welschriesling with its earthy funk—gemischter satz wines can contain more than 20 different grape types. The wines wrestle a cacophony of flavors and temperaments into sometimes untidy, but always beguiling, symbioses of softness and acidity, fruit and spice, herbs and minerals.

Because these blends vary so widely but unite so many different grape characteristics, it's practically impossible to find a food that can't be paired with one. Entry-level gemischter satz from Weingut Wien Cobenzl goes seamlessly with rustic fare such as wiener schnitzel. More nuanced wines, such as a resonant old-vine blend from the 400-year-old Christ family winery, hold up to spicy, salty-sweet Southeast Asian dishes. Suited to the eclectic way most of us eat and drink now, gemischter satz is less about uniformity and integration than exuberant synergy of flavors. And, happily for me, it's as vibrant as the city it comes from. 🍷

Tasting Notes Vienna Whites

Cobenzl Wiener Gemischter Satz Classic 2011 (\$14).

A bottle full of fresh, bright fruit from this winery owned by the city of Vienna. Superb balance and flexibility for all sorts of casual foods.

Hajszan Wiener Gemischter Satz Weissleiten 2011 (\$25). A mind-bending mix of spice and fruit with a mature, settled complexity. Try it with charcuterie.

Rosengartl Alte Reben 2011 (\$42). A bigger style from a small, focused vineyard. Refined, old-soul wine, with a distinctly smoky essence.

Christ Wiener Gemischter Satz Bisamberg Alte Reben 2011 (\$35).

Made from 70-year-old vines, this wine offers almost everything: nutty flavors and aromas, unctuous texture, structure, citric freshness, length, and ageability.

Ambrositsch Wiener Gemischter Satz Sommereg 2011 (\$58). More than 20 different varieties help construct an astonishingly lively wine bouncing in dozens of directions. Soft spices, exotic fruit, sea salt, light smoke.



JOE APPEL writes a weekly wine column in the Portland Press Herald, and his blog is *Soul of Wine*. This is his first article for SAVEUR.

— ANOTHER NEWTONISM —

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ROAD OF LIFE
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BERRY
RIDE SHOTGUN**



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REAL FRUIT. 100% WHOLE GRAIN. FIBER.
ONE UNIQUE COOKIE.**

SOURCE



Go Fish

Piquant neonata is the taste of the Calabrian coast

BY REBECCA FLINT MARX

I HAVE KNOWN MANY CONDIMENTS in my lifetime, and I have known many fish. But until I enrolled in a pizza-making class in Manhattan last year, I had never known how perfect a union of the two could be. As we embellished our pies with the usual mozzarella and basil, the school's owner dug into his refrigerator and produced a jar containing a thick, slightly oily red relish. He handed me a spoon, and a few moments later my obsession with *neonata* began. It was fiery, succulent, and totally invigorating, with a red-pepper sweetness underscored by an anchovy funk. I slathered some on a slice and took a bite. Needless to say, it yielded a pizza like no other.

The condiment is made from infant fish called *neonata* ("new born" in Italian) that are caught off the coast of the southern region of Calabria, where the spread originated. These small fry—anchovies, sardines—have a jelly-like consistency thanks to their soft young

bones. They're preserved with salt, a mix of sweet and hot peppers, and occasionally olive oil, and left to cure for a month. The result could be called an Italian *nuoc mam*, though Italians refer to it as *il caviale del sud*, the caviar of the south.

This fish sauce, which goes by the name *rosamarina* in Calabria, may well have remained unknown to me if not for D. Coluccio & Sons, a Brooklyn importer that began carrying it more than a decade ago. But thanks to the ease and low cost of preparation, *neonata* has long been a Calabrian staple. It lasts for about a year, a longevity that has made the protein-rich product especially valuable during times of famine and war when food is scarce.

On its home turf, *neonata* is used to anoint pasta, or smeared on toast with red onion and tomato, where it adds an umami punch that heightens other flavors without overwhelming them. I also like to toss it with sautéed squid and broccoli rabe for depth and kick. And I rarely eat pizza without it. A 6.7-ounce jar of *neonata* costs \$8.50, plus shipping. To order, visit dcoluccioandsons.com. 🐟

REBECCA FLINT MARX is a food writer in New York City. This is her first story for SAVEUR.

MICHAEL KRAUS

And this

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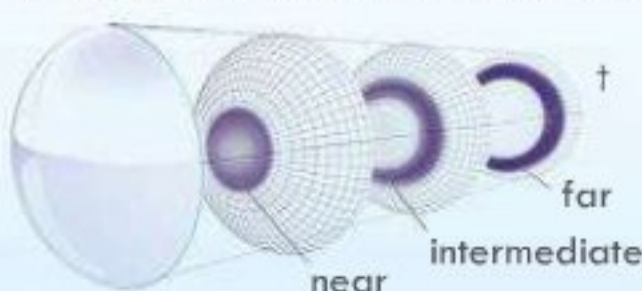
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Rx only

Welcome One, Welcome All

A 67-year-old Cincinnati institution serves up more than comfort food

BY KEITH PANDOLFI

ON A RECENT afternoon, Joe Tucker, a spirited man of Appalachian descent, stood behind the counter of Tucker's Restaurant in Cincinnati, a worn Bengals cap squeezed over his gray hair. He was working a flattop grill crammed with sizzling beef patties, eggs over easy, and thick slices of the beloved pinhead oat and sausage loaf known as goetta.

"This one's for John, this one's for Kenny, and this one's for Mikey, okay?" he instructed a young waiter, then slid a plate of shrimp and grits, a steaming bowl of chili, and his famous double-decker Big Tucker burger across the Formica countertop. Alongside Joe, his wife, Carla, a tall, tough, sweetheart of a woman, prepped the ripe fruit, crisp greens, and garden's worth of herbs that help elevate Joe's dishes far beyond the standard

Carla preps the ripe fruit and garden's worth of herbs that elevate Joe's dishes beyond greasy-spoon fare

greasy-spoon fare. She turned around, locking her eyes on a young Asian-American customer seated at a swiveling stool.

"What the hell happened to your face?" she asked. The kid looked up from his coffee, revealing cheekbones outlined in black and blue.

"I got hit by a car on Liberty Street," he said. "It's the third time I've been hit by a car in this neighborhood." He sighed. "I guess I just have really bad luck."

"That's nothing," Carla said. "There's a guy who comes in here who's been hit by the Metro bus five times."

Eavesdropping on their conversation, I thought about how Tucker's has always catered to Cincinnati's down on their luck—from the kid with the busted-up face to the homeless patrons who come in for free coffee to the old-timers who've watched this once-thriving block go from working class to

working poor to downright poor. For more than six decades, Tucker's has remained here for everyone, come what may. It's the kind of place where you might find the mayor of Cincinnati, who pops by for a bacon cheeseburger, sitting next to some corner boys, in turn sitting next to a business-suited exec on a lunch break from Procter & Gamble.

"Tried the cheesecake yet?" Joe asked me, and before I could answer, there was a slice in front of me. Made by an octogenarian customer named Bernice, it was decadent, creamy, and, well, perfect. Washing it down with black coffee, I looked toward the back where the restaurant's 92-year-old matriarch, Maynie Tucker, sat peeling russet potatoes, occasionally lowering her eyeglasses to stare piercingly at Joe, Carla, and the waiters. A sign behind the counter read, "If we ain't working hard, go tell Mama."

It was a January morning 12 years ago when my friend Jen suggested we go to Tucker's for breakfast. I knew of it, sure. I'd driven by the clapboard storefront practically every day in the early '90s as I made my way, bleary-eyed, to my opening shift at the downtown Starbucks where I spent too many post-college years.

In the old German enclave of Over-the-Rhine, Tucker's occupied a forgotten strip of decrepit Italianate buildings that seemed as if they were dying alone. Growing up in the Cincinnati suburbs in the 1980s, I knew this part of town only from the evening news, when anxious-looking reporters stood before yellow police tape, detailing the latest shooting. Now, as Jen parked her Toyota, I practically ran for cover to the restaurant's front door. What I saw once inside would change my perceptions of Over-the-Rhine forever. There were old folks, gay folks, black folks, and white folks—even a monk from the church down the street—all eating and talking with one another.

I had spent a lot of time fending off worries that my hometown was close-minded (we

tossed out Robert Mapplethorpe on his ass, we let the KKK put crosses on our square); here was Cincinnati as I wanted it to be, a city where everyone got along.

And then there was that spectacular sandwich. The juiciness sealed within the golden brown exterior of an Amish chicken breast, the richness of melted Swiss cheese, the earthiness of the mushrooms—it was the best chicken sandwich ever. The home fries deluxe, buried beneath meaty portobello mushrooms, sweet peppers, ripe tomatoes, and fresh basil, presented the perfect compromise between breakfast staple and summer salad. The berries on the side were so sweet that I asked for seconds.

"They get their ingredients from Findlay Market," Jen told me as she scarfed down Carla's special Mayan Bake, polenta layered with beans and vegetables with a smoky chipotle sauce. She was referring to the century-and-a-half-old public market a few blocks away. But while that explained why everything tasted fresh, it didn't account for why Joe and Carla Tucker had bothered to elevate a menu of short-order standbys to such heights. And it didn't explain how this white Appalachian family had remained on this almost exclusively black block since the 1950s. How, I thought, could this place exist?

The answer to that question takes us back to the 1940s, when Over-the-Rhine was still bustling with factories making everything from soap to potato chips. That's when Joe's father, Escom Garth, or E.G., and his wife, Maynie, arrived from Somerset, Kentucky, as part of a migration that took thousands to Ohio's cities looking for factory work after the Appalachian coal mines shut down.

E.G. found work in a factory. Then he saw that a little restaurant was up for sale on 13th Street. He pleaded with Maynie to

Carla Tucker presides over Tucker's, a family-run diner in Cincinnati.



BRUCE CRIPPEN

quit her job at the Baldwin piano factory, and in 1946, they founded the first iteration of Tucker's. (The family opened others in subsequent years, but now just one original location, run by Joe and Carla, remains.) Their diner served workers and families around the clock. The dishes were hearty workingman's fare—chicken and dumplings, chopped steak in tomato gravy—all made using the best ingredients the couple could afford. Joe remembers his dad driving around the back lots of Findlay Market at twilight, loading up with produce bought at end-of-day discounts. After that, he'd head toward the Ohio River, where the slaughterhouses sold scraps for nearly nothing.

While E.G. and Maynie's venture was a success, prices had to stay low for their clientele, so the couple was always struggling to make ends meet. That didn't stop them from helping others. They gave away Thanksgiving turkeys, held fund-raisers for the uninsured, and set up tabs for customers they knew darn well could never settle them.

"My parents used to bring me here when I was a kid, just to show me that someone still cared about us," Tucker's customer David McDonald, who grew up in Over-the-Rhine during its darkest days, told me.

Joe, 54, had never planned on taking over. He spent his early days at the local rail yards working as a surveyor. But five years before E.G. died in 2003, Joe took the reins. It was Carla, however, who created the exceptional menu. After hearing students from the nearby School of Creative and Performing Arts clamor for vegetarian options, she started experimenting, whipping up a meatless chili, turning Joe's simple home fries into those home fries deluxe, piling as many fresh fruits and vegetables as she could on top of these and other dishes.

Meanwhile, the block of Vine where Tucker's current location stands was as desolate as ever. Broken bottles, discarded

needles, and the occasional dead rat littered the streets. Somehow the restaurant has remained. Despite the disturbing amount of crime that takes place around it, in its entire history, Tucker's has never experienced a robbery. When riots erupted here in 2001 over the cops' shooting of an unarmed black man, neighbors united with Joe in front of the diner to fend off would-be looters. "No one messes with Tucker's," McDonald told me.

Two years ago, though, someone did. During the morning rush, a pair of men walked in and pointed their guns toward the lunch counter. Their target was a man seated at one of the stools, but they missed, spraying Carla with shotgun pellets and hitting an 18-year-old customer in the back. While Carla recovered, that customer will forever remain paralyzed from the waist down.

My eyes grew misty in my Brooklyn apartment when I read about the shooting in the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. I thought back to all those news reports from when I was a kid. Had I never been to Tucker's, I wouldn't have been surprised. But I had grown familiar with the place, and this shooting seemed inconceivable. I was relieved when I read about the response to the crime: When Joe and Maynie reopened a few days later, they found hundreds of well-wishers, including the mayor, waiting for them. "So many people showed up that Joe had to lock the doors at 1:30 in the afternoon because he ran out of food," Carla, who's still a little stiff from the wounds, told me.

As I sat there at the counter eating Bernice's cheesecake that day, I fixed my eyes on Mama as she sat peeling her potatoes. I'd been told that Mama is sweet as pie, but I've always been afraid to approach her. Today, though, I gave it a try. "Sorry. I'm too busy to talk right now," she said in her syrupy Kentucky drawl. "Come back when I'm done."

When I did, she told me about how she

worked as a riveter "just like Rosie" during the war, how E.G. was on a date with her cousin when she first met him, but after tasting the cookies she'd baked he switched his allegiance. There was an awkward silence when she decided she'd told me all she cared to. "You ready to go home now, Mama?" Carla's sister, Michelle, asked her. "Well, I suppose I am," Mama said, easing herself up. As she exited, Maynie Tucker offered me this: "There's an old song I used to love when I was younger: 'Oh, I don't know where you came from, 'cause I don't know where you been. But it really doesn't matter, grab a chair and fill your platter—and dig, dig, dig right in.'" 

Goetta

SERVES 6–8

Pinhead, or steel-cut, oats bulk up this hearty sausage loaf, an Ohio breakfast staple usually served with eggs and toast.

- 1½ lb. boneless beef chuck, cut into 1" pieces
- ¾ lb. boneless pork shoulder, cut into 1" pieces
- 4 cups beef stock
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 1 cup steel-cut oats
- ¼ cup dried onion flakes
- 1¼ tsp. ground white pepper
- ¼ cup canola oil

1 Line a 9" x 5" loaf pan with plastic wrap, letting at least 4" hang over the edges; set aside. Bring beef, pork, stock, salt, and 4 cups water to a boil in a 6-qt. saucepan over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook until meat is very tender, 1½–2 hours. Strain meat, reserving ½ cup of cooking liquid. Transfer meat to a food processor; pulse until finely ground and set aside.

2 While meat is cooking, bring 3½ cups water to a boil in a 4-qt. saucepan over high heat. Stir in oats and salt; reduce heat to medium and cook, stirring occasionally, until oats are tender, about 15 minutes. Transfer oats to a food processor; add meat, reserved cooking liquid, onion flakes, white pepper, and salt. Purée until mixture becomes a thick paste. Press into loaf pan and fold excess plastic wrap over top; refrigerate overnight.

3 To serve, heat oil in a 12" cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. Unwrap goetta and slice crosswise into ½"-thick pieces. Working in batches, fry slices, flipping once, until crisp and browned, 4–5 minutes.



Diner City One of the things I've always loved about my hometown is its devotion to local diners and dives. Along with Tucker's, my favorites include **The Echo** (3510 Edwards Road; 513/321-2816) in Hyde Park, on Cincinnati's east side (left). Opened in 1945, it's the kind

of joint where waitresses are apt to stick around for a quarter-century or so, and where you can linger over corned beef hash, homemade pies, and satisfying meat loaf dinners. Of the same vintage is the ramshackle **Anchor Grill** (438 Pike Street; 859/431-9498), located just across the river in Covington, Kentucky, a nautically themed dive (center) where the booths feature mini jukeboxes, and you can sit down and devour a delicious Cincinnati-style GLT (goetta, lettuce, and tomato). Finally, on the ground floor of downtown's grand art deco-style Carew Tower is **Hathaway's Coffee Shop** (441 Vine Street; 513/621-1332), a 1956 landmark with two U-shaped counters and an aqua décor (right) that make you feel as if you're living in a Buddy Holly song. The food is no-frills but reliable: patty melts, turkey clubs, sundaes, and a fine cup of coffee. Some of the waitresses here even sport beehive hairdos—without irony. —K.P.

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DRINK



Papa's Favorite Poison

Straight up, over ice, or frozen, daiquiris are just as good now as when Hemingway drank them

ROBERT SIMONSON

YEARS AGO, I HAD LITTLE USE for the daiquiri. I regarded it as a fruity, frothy, adolescent concoction, made for injudicious college drinking and the “specialty cocktail” page at chain restaurants, all too often impregnated with artificial colors and flavors. Then something changed: Mixologists rediscovered the drink. Using careful techniques and artisan rums, they started pouring daiquiris of beauty and of balance. How could a cocktail I once dismissed as garish be able to clean up so nicely? It simply went back to its roots. As I found out when I looked into the matter, the daiquiri in its inaugural incarnation possessed a dignity and purity to match any libation.

Rum, lime juice, and sugar: Americans, British sailors, and Caribbean locals have been mixing these ingredients for nearly as long as sugarcane and citrus have been grown in the West Indies. Colonial America loved punch, a sweet, citrusy potion; rum, distilled from Caribbean cane or molasses, regularly found its way into the bowl. During the 1700s, British sailors spiked their daily ration of watered-

Top row, from left: Derby daiquiri, Hemingway Special, Airmail. Second row, from left: Jasper's Jamaican, Blackberry Blast, Beach Towel. Third row, from left: classic daiquiri, Kapu Kai, Pineapple Express. (See [page 34](#) for recipes.)

TODD COLEMAN (9)

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down rum with lime and sugar. For this reason, the seamen became known as “limeys.” In fact, there are endless variations on the island trio, including Brazil’s caipirinha and Martinique’s ti’ punch. The daiquiri, Cuba’s 19th-century gift to the world, is arguably the prime exemplar of this strong, tart, sweet balance of flavors.

The man who gets the lion’s share of credit for bringing the drink’s harmonious flavors together under the moniker “daiquiri” was not a bartender but a mining engineer. Jennings Cox was a rotund, bow-tie-sporting American who worked at a Cuban iron mine around the time of the Spanish-American War. A jolly entertainer, he’d serve large batches of his own liquid invention, a just-so blend of light-bodied white rum (probably Cuba’s own Bacardi brand), lime, and sugar. Stories vary, but at one point or another, one guest came up with the bright idea of naming it after the town where Cox mined: Daiquirí.

Thinking he was onto something, Cox took his daiquiri to a couple of upscale bars he hung out at in nearby Santiago de Cuba, the Hotel Venus bar and the private San Carlos Club. According to Jeff “Beachbum” Berry, author of the forthcoming *Potions of the Caribbean: 500 Years of Tropical Drinks and the People Behind Them* (Mud Puddle Inc., 2013), a bartender Cox introduced the drink to began mixing it in single servings that he poured over shaved ice in a cocktail glass. From Santiago the recipe traveled to Havana, where the added steps of shaking and straining the mixture turned it into a straight-up cocktail.

Within the next couple of decades, a perfect storm of circumstances conspired to make the daiquiri a border-crossing hit. In 1909, an American naval officer named Lucius Johnson went to a shindig at Cox’s place, pocketed the recipe, and took it back to Washington, D.C., where it became the signature at the Army and Navy Club. Eleven years later, Prohibition was passed, instilling in thirsty Americans an interest in travel to Cuba, where liquor still flowed freely. Anyone drinking in Havana was bound to encounter a daiquiri at some point. In the 1930s, the drink got an added boost by the one-man publicity machine known as Ernest Hemingway, who had decamped to Cuba seeking quiet to write. He ended up spending just as much time drinking at a Havana bar called El Floridita as he did composing terse sentences; “Papa” liked how the owner, Constantino Ribalaigua Vert, handled a daiquiri. Hemingway’s fame rubbed off on the drink. On a wave of rum that flooded the States following Prohibition’s repeal, the daiquiri swept the country.

For today’s purists, it is tempting to believe that the daiquiri’s virtue as a pared-down masterpiece—shaken, strained, and served straight up—remained unstained until the 1970s, when some bartenders threw the poor girl into a blender. But that’s not exactly the case. The words *frozen* and *daiquiri* were never quite strangers. Those chilly potions Hemingway guzzled at El Floridita were served on piles of

shaved ice. In the 1928 work *When It’s Cocktail Time in Cuba*, Prohibition-era writer Basil Woon cautioned that the drink “must be drunk frozen or it is not good.” He probably meant you should serve it very cold. But the notion is there.

When the Waring blender was introduced to America in 1937, encouraging people to make smoothies out of everything, the daiquiri was transformed, as Wayne Curtis puts it in *And a Bottle of Rum* (Crown, 2006), into “something to be eaten with a spoon.” It stands to reason that postwar America’s love of mechanical convenience and the need for speedy service in the discos and singles’ bars of the 1970s sealed the drink’s slushy fate. In 1971, Dallas resident Mariano Martinez paired up with inventor Frank Adams to make the first frozen drink machine, and the daiquiri, in a rainbow of fruity new flavors, returned to batch proportions. Today, manufacturers such as Louisiana’s Frosty Factory of America, supplier to many of New Orleans’ drive-thru daiquiri shops, boast contraptions that dispense 30 gallons of icy cocktail per hour. For bar owners, it’s a heck of a lot less work than blending drinks one at a time.

But, as I’ve found out, the effort it takes to make a daiquiri by hand is well worth it. Of course, like many classics, it is easy to make and easy to get wrong. Because there are only three ingredients, a classic daiquiri can quickly be thrown out of whack. Too much sugar or lime (or too little), and you’re sunk. As one barkeep told me of the cocktail, “There’s nowhere to hide.”

To make a proper daiquiri, the lime juice must be fresh squeezed. Simple syrup (basically sugar water) should be used to achieve a smooth consistency. And the rum must possess the right mix of lightness, body, and pungency; aged rum, so delicious on its own or in tiki drinks, makes for an inappropriately ponderous daiquiri. For me, 86 Co.’s Caña Brava, a Panamanian rum, has enough lightness, as well as an intriguingly gamey flavor, to make a balanced

daiquiri. I’m also a fan of St. George’s Spirits Agua Libre California Agricole Rum. Pressed from fresh sugarcane, it adds grassy, pungent depth to the drink. Once I have my mighty trio ready, I measure each into a cocktail shaker, give it a hearty rattle over plenty of ice, and strain it into a chilled coupe. It took practice, but I now make a pretty fine daiquiri: potent, piquant, and just this side of sweet.

And I have to agree with something that today’s mixologists already know: The daiquiri is endlessly adaptable. Once I learned to master the original, it was a simple side step to the Hemingway Special. The version, which the legendary writer enjoyed at El Floridita, incorporates maraschino liqueur and grapefruit juice. When I’m in the mood for a sparkling drink, I try the Airmail daiquiri, which includes champagne. If I want to go stronger, I mix up a Kapu Kai, which calls for high-proof Lemon Hart 151 Demerara rum. I’ve even come to appreciate frozen inventions when they’re crafted by a skilled bartender using fresh ingredients—blackberries, strawberries and bananas, cinnamon and pineapple—and that balanced undergirding of rum, sugar, and lime. With each new, delicious creation, I’ve found that the daiquiri hasn’t deserted its island roots at all. 🍹



In the 1950s Ernest Hemingway could often be found sipping daiquiris with family and friends at the Havana bar El Floridita.

ROBERT SIMONSON writes about drinks for The New York Times. This is his first article for SAVEUR.



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AIRMAIL

MAKES 1 COCKTAIL

Bartender Thad Vogler of San Francisco's Bar Agricole gave us his recipe for this bubbly drink.

- 1½ oz. Barbancourt 8YO rum
- 1 oz. honey syrup (½ oz. honey mixed with ½ oz. boiling water)
- ¾ oz. fresh lime juice
- 1 oz. dry champagne
- ¼ oz. Angostura bitters

Combine rum, syrup, and juice in ice-filled shaker; shake. Strain into chilled glass; top with champagne and bitters.

BEACH TOWEL

MAKES 2 COCKTAILS

This fruity frozen daiquiri is a great dessert drink.

- 4 oz. white rum, such as Bacardi Superior rum
- 3 oz. simple syrup
- 1 oz. fresh lime juice
- 10 strawberries
- ½ oz. heavy cream
- 1 small banana, sliced

Purée half the rum, syrup, juice, berries, and 1½ cups ice in a blender. Pour into 2 glasses; freeze. Purée remaining rum, syrup, juice, cream, bananas, and 1½ cups ice. Pour over strawberry.

BLACKBERRY BLAST

MAKES 2 COCKTAILS

Agricole rum, made from fresh sugarcane, adds rich flavor to this frozen drink.

- 1 cup blackberries, plus more for garnish
- 2 oz. simple syrup
- 2 oz. agricole rum, preferably St. George
- ½ oz. fresh lime juice, plus wedge, for garnish
- ¼ oz. Angostura bitters

Blend berries and syrup; strain. Return syrup to blender along with rum, juice, bitters, and 1½ cups ice; purée. Pour into glasses; garnish with fruit.

★ CLASSIC DAIQUIRI

MAKES 1 COCKTAIL

A crisp white rum is perfect for this elegant classic.

- 1½ oz. Caña Brava rum
- ½ oz. simple syrup
- ¾ oz. fresh lime juice

Combine ingredients in ice-filled shaker; shake. Strain over crushed ice into a cocktail glass.

DERBY DAIQUIRI

MAKES 1 COCKTAIL

This drink is from Fort Lauderdale's Mai-Kai.

- 1½ oz. Bacardi Superior rum

THE PANTRY, page 84: Information on rum and other daiquiri ingredients.

- 1 oz. fresh orange juice, plus wedge
- ½ oz. fresh lime juice
- ½ oz. simple syrup

Combine rum, juices, and syrup in an ice-filled shaker; shake. Strain into a chilled glass; garnish with orange wedge.

★ HEMINGWAY SPECIAL

MAKES 1 COCKTAIL

At Havana, Cuba's El Floridita bar, this daiquiri was a usual order of author Ernest Hemingway.

- 2 oz. agricole rum, preferably St. George
- ¾ oz. fresh lime juice
- ½ oz. fresh grapefruit juice
- ½ oz. maraschino liqueur
- ½ oz. simple syrup
- Maraschino cherries, for garnish

Combine rum, juices, liqueur, and syrup in ice-filled shaker; shake. Strain over crushed ice into a cocktail glass; garnish with cherries.

JASPER'S JAMAICAN

MAKES 1 COCKTAIL

This Jamaican-style daiquiri calls for rum from its 264-year-old Appleton Estate.

- 1¼ oz. Appleton Reserve rum
- ½ oz. fresh lime juice
- ½ oz. allspice liqueur, preferably St. Elizabeth
- ½ oz. simple syrup
- Freshly grated nutmeg, for garnish
- Grapefruit segment, for garnish

Combine rum, juice, liqueur, and syrup in ice-filled shaker; shake. Strain into a chilled glass; garnish with nutmeg and grapefruit segment.

KAPU KAI

MAKES 1 COCKTAIL

This drink comes from Jeff Berry and Annene Kaye's *Beachbum's Grog Log* (SLG, 1998).

- 1½ oz. demerara rum, preferably Lemon Hart 151
- ¾ oz. fresh lime juice
- ¾ oz. simple syrup

Combine ingredients in ice-filled shaker; shake. Strain into chilled glass.

PINEAPPLE EXPRESS

MAKES 2 COCKTAILS

Cinnamon adds warm spice to this frosty treat.

- 2 oz. white rum, preferably Brugal
- 1 oz. coconut rum, preferably Bacardi Malibu
- 4 oz. crushed pineapple, plus wedges
- ½ oz. fresh lime juice
- 1 oz. cinnamon syrup, such as Trader Tiki's
- Maraschino cherries, for garnish

Purée rums, pineapple, juice, syrup, and 1½ cups ice in a blender. Pour into cocktail glasses; garnish with pineapple wedge and cherries.

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Worth the Wait

Part of the allure of rendang is the meditative process of cooking it

BY JAMES OSELAND



★ Beef Rendang

(Dry-Braised Beef Curry)

SERVES 4–6

This luscious Indonesian dish, from a recipe in the author's book *Cradle of Flavor* (W.W. Norton, 2006), is traditionally eaten with white rice, but it is also wonderful with crusty Italian bread. For hard-to-find ingredients, see [page 84](#).

- 5 whole cloves
- 1 whole nutmeg, slightly crushed in a mortar and pestle
- 6–8 red Holland chiles, or 3–4 Thai chiles, stemmed and roughly chopped
- 6 small shallots, roughly chopped
- 5 candlenuts or macadamia nuts
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 2" piece fresh or frozen turmeric, peeled and roughly chopped, or 1½ tsp. ground turmeric
- 1 2" piece ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 2" piece galangal, peeled and thinly sliced
- 2 lb. boneless beef chuck, cut into 2" pieces
- 7 fresh or frozen Kaffir lime leaves, plus 4 very thinly sliced, for garnish
- 3 stalks lemongrass, trimmed, smashed with a mallet, and tied into knots
- 2 sticks cinnamon
- 2½ cups unsweetened coconut milk
- Kosher salt, to taste

ONE OF THE MOST AMAZING things I've ever eaten was at a potluck lunch. I was all of 19, an American traveler on my first visit to Indonesia, and the dish proved life changing. It was beef *rendang*, a specialty of West Sumatra, an Indonesian province with a celebrated cuisine, and it helped seal my fate as a person whose life's work would revolve around cooking and eating.

Why did *rendang* rock my world? The glistening meat, fall-apart tender, was coated with a thick sauce of such complexity that I was at first taken aback—and, a moment later, smitten. In it, nutmeg, cloves, cinnamon, garlic, chiles, and a host of other ingredients harmonized. I was accustomed to American-style beef dishes—stews, pot roast—made with just a few seasonings. They were more liquidy and less flavorful than this Southeast Asian preparation. I was left with such a curiosity about the dish that I had to learn to cook it.

When I did, *rendang* amazed me even more. Instead of searing the meat before cooking it in liquid, as is done with a Western-style braise, I learned that I needed to

reverse the process: I started with an aromatic melange including chiles, ginger, and fresh turmeric, all blended with coconut milk to make a sauce. Next came nicely marbled cubes of beef—in Indonesia, water buffalo is often the meat of choice—which I cooked in the sauce, ever so slowly. For hours the uncovered pan gently bubbled, sugars caramelized and fats rendered, until the sauce turned sludgy, the meat yielded to a fork, and the liquid had all but evaporated. Finally, the beef seared in its own fat and that of the coconut milk. It ended up as dark as chocolate, gleaming, and intense. I devoured it atop a hillock of rice, as the dish is eaten in Indonesia. There, *rendang* is a homespun preservation technique, used for everything from beef to chicken. The method is Indonesia's answer to charcuterie: The seasonings and salt cure the food.

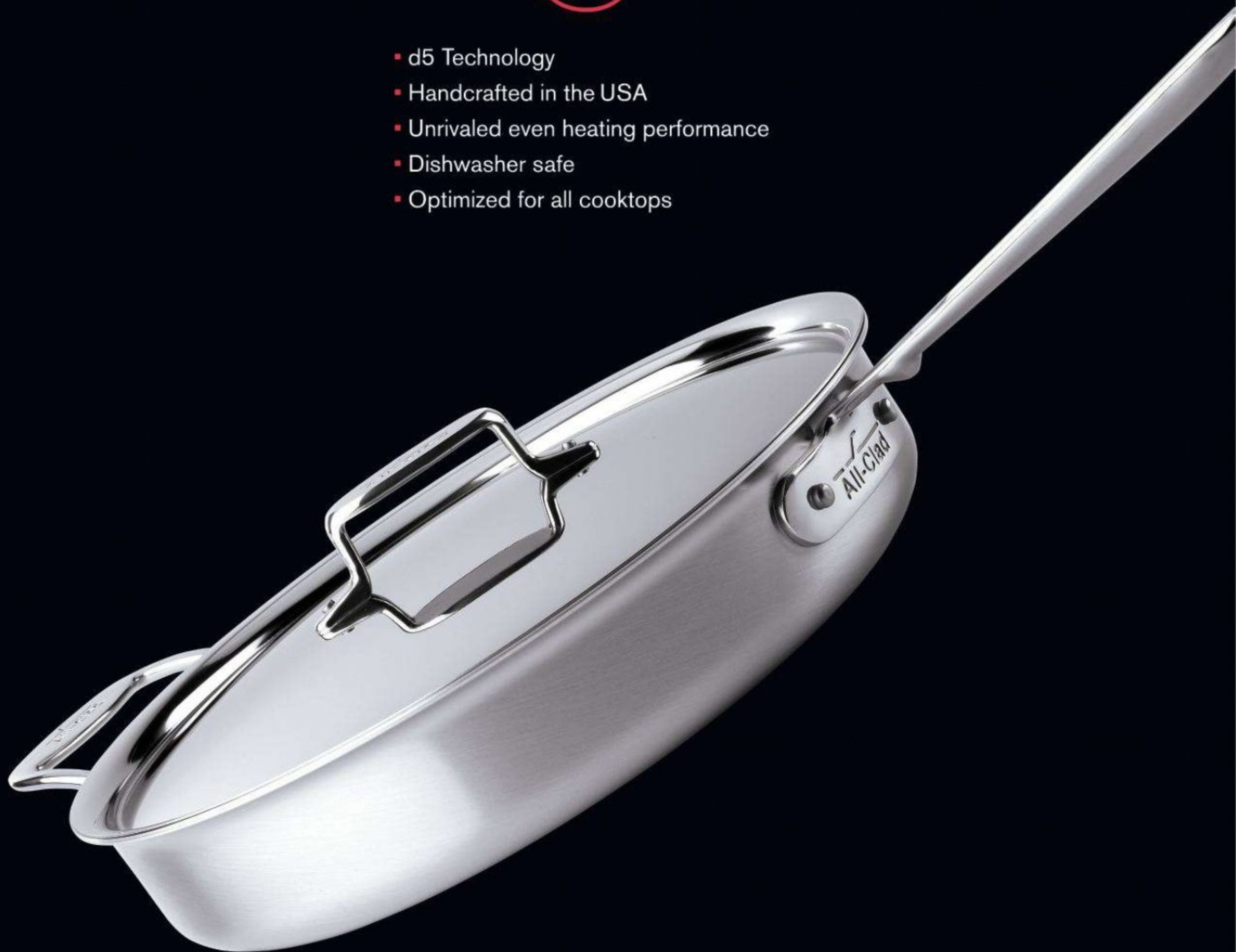
Though it's traditionally a dish made to travel with, I find *rendang* so delicious that I gobble it up as soon as it's ready. It's Indonesia's gift to me, the finale to a day spent blessedly slowed down. 🐘

Pulse cloves and nutmeg in a food processor until very fine. Add chiles, shallots, nuts, garlic, turmeric, ginger, and galangal; purée until a slightly smooth paste forms, about 2 minutes. Transfer paste to a 12" nonstick skillet with beef; using your hands, mix together. Add 7 lime leaves, lemongrass knots, cinnamon, coconut milk, and salt; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook, stirring occasionally to prevent coconut milk from scorching, until the consistency of thick pea soup, about 1½ hours. Continue to cook, stirring frequently to prevent burning, until sauce and beef turn a dark caramel color and the sauce coats the beef, 2½–3 hours. Discard whole spices before serving; garnish with thinly sliced lime leaves.

JAMES OSELAND

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SPECIAL
FEATURE

THE GOLD OF NAPLES

IN THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE WORLD'S FAVORITE FOOD, THE BEST
PIZZA COMES DOWN TO THE BASICS

BY KEITH PANDOLFI PHOTOGRAPHS BY TODD COLEMAN



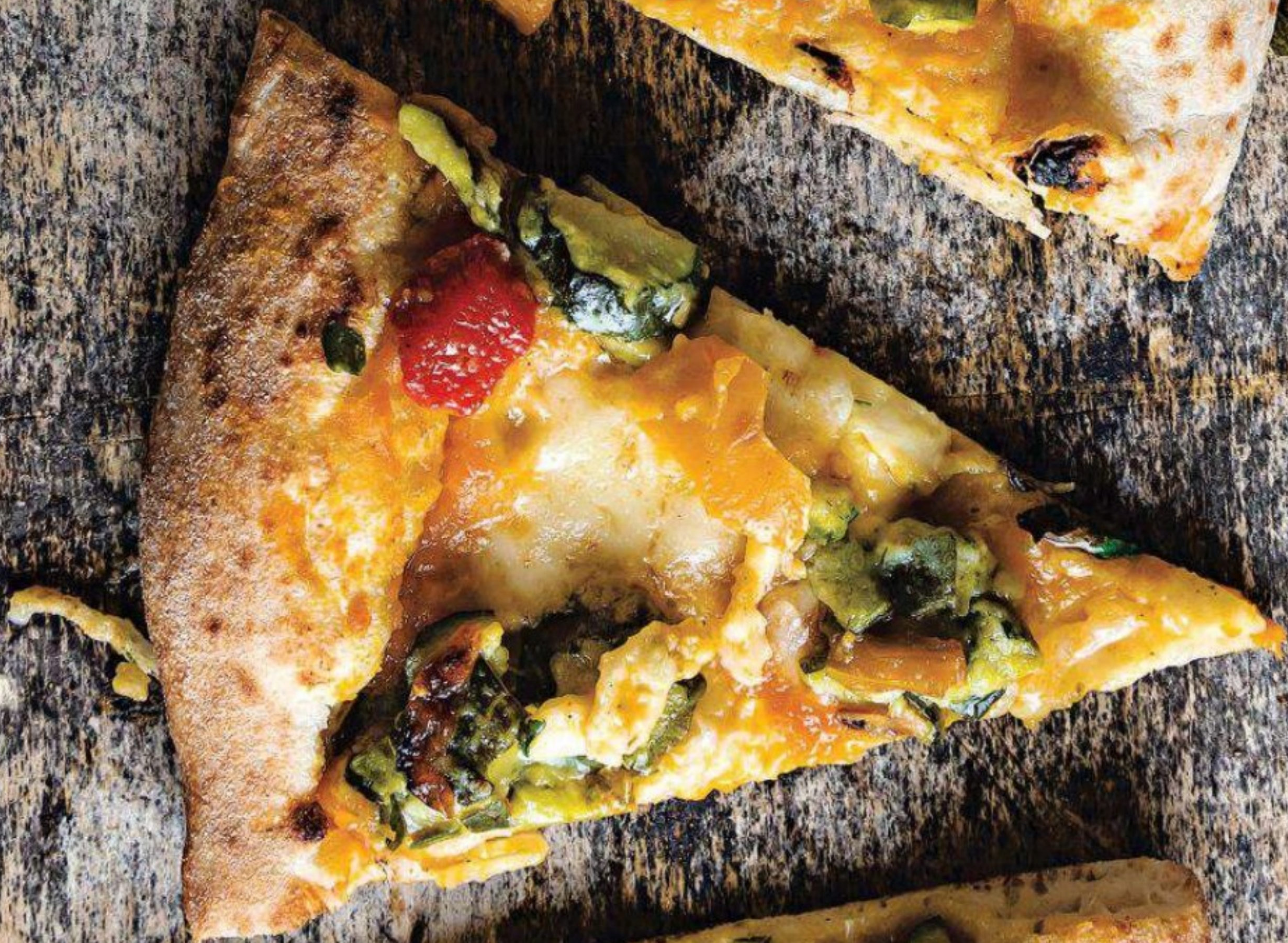


Enzo Giustiniani pulls a *pizza margherita* from the oven at Pizzeria Capatosta, the shop he owns with his brother, Lello (left), in the town of Recale near Naples, Italy.



Calzone di prosciutto e ricotta, ham and cheese calzone, at Naples' Pizzeria Starita. Facing page: *noci e zucchini*, walnut pesto and zucchini pizza (see [page 52](#) for recipes).







IT'S A COOL THURSDAY evening, and Paolo Vitale dodges his tiny Fiat through the cobblestone streets of Naples like it's an escaped bumper car. We speed past crumbling cathedrals desanctified by graffiti and 15th-century apartment buildings flying tattered flags of laundry from wrought-iron balconies. Tiny shrines are embedded into building walls. Jesus Christ is everywhere. No sleep on the flight from New York last night, and I'm experiencing that sort of anxiety codependent travelers like me are apt to feel when we leave home without someone who loves us. I start to worry I won't survive this ride, that I won't get to experience even one bite of the iconic food I've come here to eat—a food I consider part of my heritage.

Paolo is a 30-something policeman with a boyish face who smokes cigarettes and wears a black leather jacket. Despite these tough character traits, he's kind as can be, and an old friend of the other passenger in this car, Roberto Caporusco, a solidly built Neapolitan expatriate in his 50s who owns two of my favorite pizzerias in Manhattan, Kesté and Don Antonio. I've asked Roberto to meet me in Naples, the hometown of my beloved but long gone great-grandfather, to help me learn about what I, at least, deem to be my ancestral city's greatest creation: the pizza.

Strange to travel such a distance for *pizza Napoletana*, I know. These days so many American pizza makers are discovering Neapolitan techniques that you can't go a few blocks in a city like New York without passing a pizzeria with a woodburning oven. But in Naples, the pizza isn't just a technical achievement—it's an art form, a sacrament, a birthright. Here is where the fine, protein-rich Caputo "00" flour, the obsession of Italian pizza makers, called *pizzaioli* (or in the Neapolitan dialect, *pizzaiuoli*), is made right downtown at a nearly century-old family-owned mill. Here is where tomatoes flourish in volcanic soil beneath the warm Mediterranean sun, developing sweet, concentrated flavor. Here is where the water buffalo that provide the milk for moist, grassy *mozzarella di bufala* graze on marshy farmland. And here is where those iconic wood-fired ovens, whose blazing heat pulls these ingredients together to create the perfect pizza, are constructed by artisans out of brick and mortar (see "The Building Blocks of Pizza," [page 46](#)). Here, pizza is just plain better.

The Fiat lurches to a halt in front of our first destination. "Pizz-a-reee-a Star-eee-ta," Paolo announces like an Italian tour bus operator. Ah, yes, I think, the 112-year-old Starita, the historic location where Sophia Loren sold pizzas to smitten admirers in the 1954 classic *L'Oro di Napoli*, or *The Gold of Naples*, a film that is to Neapolitans what *Citizen Kane* is to Americans. So lauded is the shop that its third-generation owner, Antonio Starita, was once called to Vatican City to present a pizza to Pope John Paul II. Tonight, Antonio's 40-year-old son Giuseppe is minding the oven; I watch, mesmerized, as he builds a mouthwatering pie, layering thick, fat-studded slices of mortadella atop dough smothered with creamed pistachios. Suddenly it hits me. I am famished.

Heading off to work the night beat, Paolo bids us *buona sera* as Roberto and I make our way back to one of the rear dining rooms. "I don't understand," Roberto mumbles, a look of panic in his eyes as he notices what I count to be just three empty tables. "It's usually packed by now." But he soon figures out why. "Ah," he says, pointing to a TV mounted in a corner where onscreen a cadre of men in baby blue uniforms sprint up a grassy field. "Team Napoli." Turns out the one thing that trumps pizza in this town is soccer. As soon as the game is over, a line of 60 or more people forms, all waiting to get in.

Roberto orders us a bowl of *angioletti fritti*, fried strips of tender pizza dough, topped with a colorful salad of marinated grape tomatoes and arugula, and a plate of *frittatine di pasta*. Crunching through one of these golden fritters, I find a dense tangle of bucatini creamy with béchamel and smoked mozzarella, and dotted with diced ham. It immediately becomes my favorite fried food of all time.

Moments later, a steaming hot pizza, the Montanara Starita, arrives, its craggy crust a deep golden brown, puffed and charred in places, its tomato sauce bubbling like Vesuvian lava beneath vibrant leaves of basil. To make this special pie, Roberto tells me, a disk of dough is fried before it's topped with sauce, cheese, and herbs and set in the oven, where the sauce and cheese meld together. The process results in a crunchy crust with savory notes of toast and smoke. "You know," Roberto says, "it takes many years to learn to do this, many pies to perfect it." He should know; he trained here in his 30s, when Antonio would have him top his trial pizzas with cooked rigatoni—it's the same weight as mozzarella but less expensive.

A warm feeling washes over me as I devour the pie with a fork and knife, as locals do. I gaze across the dining room, now filling up, and see a young boy reading the menu aloud to his be-suited elder. I think of how pizza, wherever it's been imported and however revised, has brought so many walks and generations together—fathers and sons, co-workers and co-stars, study groups and track teams—to eat our pleasurable fill. So seemingly simple yet so profoundly satisfying, this amalgam of cheese, sauce, and crust is a true food of the people. God bless you, pizza.

THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON, Paolo is back behind the wheel as we head to Via dei Tribunali, an undulating roadway in the city's center lined with churches, bakeries, museums, and Naples' most ancient pizzerias. As Paolo slows to look for parking, I notice two old men in newsboy caps gesticulating wildly toward each other. One reminds me of my great-grandfather, Luigi Caputo, who left this city around 1910 for Massachusetts where he married my great-grandmother, Maria. I wonder if Luigi had ever missed this place. He died before I was old enough to ask him.

Our first stop is Il Pizzaiolo del Presidente, where the boisterous *pizzaiolo* Enzo Cacialli bursts toward us insisting we sample his *pizza frita*. Fried pizzas are common here, a holdover from the days when many shops had no room for the dome-shaped oven that the pizza is associated with today. They're usually just lard-smothered dough topped with sauce and cheese, or stuffed (*continued on* [page 48](#))

A steaming hot pizza arrives, its craggy crust a deep golden brown, puffed and charred in places, its tomato sauce bubbling like lava

Facing page: Starita's butternut squash–topped *pizza del papa*, pope's pizza (see [page 54](#) for a recipe).



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ANATOMY OF A PIZZERIA

At Naples' Pizzeria Starita, the men who prepare the pizza include:

① THE MASTO E DONDERO

The man who keeps the trains running on time, the *masto e dondero* is in charge of managing incoming and outgoing orders, making sure everyone's working in sync, and plating (or boxing) pizzas fresh from the oven.

② THE FRIGGITORE

Neapolitan pizzerias are known not just for their pizzas but also for their *angioletti fritti* (fried dough strips), *frittatine di pasta* (pasta fritters), and other fried specialties, all prepared by this guy.

③ THE FORNINO

The baker of the pizzeria, the *fornino* wields a long-handled peel to transfer the pizza to the oven. As it cooks, he moves and rotates it a few times to ensure an even char, lifting it toward the flame-licked oven roof at the end of the process so the toppings emerge bubbling hot. A good *fornino* will cook a pizza to perfection in less than two minutes.

④ THE PIZZAIOLO

The executive chef of the Neapolitan pizzeria, this man flips and stretches and shapes the dough, adds all the toppings, and gives the finished product a final form-perfecting tug before pulling it onto the peel.

⑤ THE ASSISTANT PIZZAIOLO

Given the job of prying the dough off the baking sheet, then flipping it in semolina before handing it to the *pizzaiolo*, this understudy—often a *pizzaiolo* in training—takes over when the lead guy needs a break. —K.P.



THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF PIZZA

A true Neapolitan pizza is the sum of its simple but sublime parts: dough, tomato sauce, cheese, and heat. In Naples, pizza makers have the best of each element to work with.

DOUGH

No factor influences the taste and texture of *pizza Napoletana* more than the dough. A good dough, made with finely milled wheat flour containing quality proteins, results in a light, airy crust with a sweet, nutty flavor and a springy chew. In Italy, flours range from “2” for the coarsest grade to “000” for the finest. Most Neapolitan pizza makers swear by the locally produced Caputo “00” flour. To guarantee the highest quality and consistency, as well as the best flavor, Caputo, a family-owned mill that has been located in the heart of downtown Naples since 1924, sources wheat from all over the world. This dedication is manifest in a fluffy white flour whose proteins, or glutens, yield a dough with superb extensibility, meaning it can be stretched without ripping.

TOMATOES

The luscious plum tomatoes grown in Campania and neighboring Puglia are prized here for their deep, sweet, tangy flavor, as well as easy-to-peel skins and relatively few seeds. Since these tomatoes have a profile that speaks for itself, most Neapolitan *pizzaioli* make their pizza sauces simply—using whole peeled canned versions, with little more than some salt added. While these tomatoes are often labeled “San Marzano,” only a fraction of tomatoes are grown specifically within the San Marzano Protected Designation of Origin (D.O.P.) region, an area in the Sarno River Valley between Naples and Salerno.

CHEESE

With twice the fat content of mozzarella made with cows’ milk, Campania’s *mozzarella di bufala* is far more creamy and flavorful. Of course, since water buffalo produce little more than two gallons of milk a day compared with the average dairy cow’s nearly seven gallons, their coveted cheese is often more expensive. The best *mozzarella di bufala* is produced near the city of Caserta north of Naples. Here, water buffalo brought over from Asia more than a thousand years ago thrive in the marshy environment. While many Neapolitan pizzas come topped with *mozzarella di bufala*, most shops also offer versions made with *fior di latte*, a cows’ milk cheese. Some *pizzaioli* prefer the latter; along with being more affordable, its lower fat content makes it easier to melt.

OVENS

The ingredients compose the recipe, but it’s the blazing fire that transforms them into pizza. The chamber of a classic Neapolitan oven, made of firebrick and mortar, has a low-domed ceiling that concentrates the fire, creating the extreme heat (from 750 to 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit) necessary to cook pizza quickly. The bottom of the chamber is made of Biscotto di Sorrento, a heat-absorbing material that prevents crusts from burning. Beneath the oven floor lies a layer of Vesuvian soil to absorb even more heat. The oven’s thick exterior walls, constructed of fireclay insulation, are often dressed in ceramic tiles, which make the ovens colorful centerpieces of many Naples shops.



Making *mozzarella di bufala* at Agricola Casearia Lupara, a cheese producer in Caserta, 20 miles northeast of Naples.

The rustic calzone, puffed up like a fairy-tale clamshell, is stuffed with warm escarole, anchovies, pecorino, and buffalo mozzarella

Facing page, scenes from Naples. Top row, from left: Starita's *angioletti fritti*, fried dough, with arugula and grape tomatoes; a baker at Mercato di Antignano; Starita's *rachetta*. Second row: sharing a pizza at Il Pizzaiolo del Presidente; a *pizza margherita*; forming dough. Third row: a Montanara Starita pizza; the line outside Starita; pistachio and mortadella pizza. Bottom row: a vendor peddling Sorrento lemons; *frittatina di pasta*, a pasta-filled fritter, at Starita; a scale at Mercato di Antignano. (Recipes begin on [page 52](#).)

(continued from [page 43](#)) calzone-style, but Enzo's decadent version features two fried pies sandwiching a filling of tomatoes, gooey provolone, ricotta, salami, and the delicious pressed pork loaf known as *ciccioli*. While Roberto and Enzo catch up with each other, Paolo and I, not knowing each other's language, sit silently together picking at the pizza. It's delicious but too rich to finish, at least if we plan on sampling anything else today. "Very goooood," he says to me. "Molto bene," I reply.

Next up is Di Matteo, which, like many older pizzerias here, maintains its original *friggitoria*, a street-side window serving fast foods such as rice balls, *frittatine*, and eight-inch pizzas folded into fours called *portafogli* ("wallets"). Roberto tells me that it was only during the past half-century that many pizzerias of Via dei Tribunali started expanding to create dining rooms; before that, pizza's consumption was largely limited to the streets.

That takeout tradition dates back centuries. While yeasted flat breads are ancient and ubiquitous, it's in Naples that they became pizza. I've thumbed through plenty of books trying to figure out why, but the answers are murky at best. All I know is that sometime, likely in the mid-17th century, Neapolitans started realizing that those ornamental tomatoes brought over by the Spanish weren't poisonous as had been believed. And soon after, the *pomo d'oro*, or golden apple, made its way into pasta dishes and atop the flat breads sold to the city's poor from small storefronts and pushcarts. By the 1800s, those tomato-sauced pizzas became known as *pizza marinara*, named for fishermen who nourished themselves with the handheld victuals before heading out to sea. Along with tomato sauce, the *marinara* was often topped with olive oil, fresh herbs, and salt, though more luxurious versions were sprinkled with meats, shaved dry cheeses, or sardines.

Nearly 100 years later, in 1889, something magical happened that would change pizza's role in Neapolitan society forever. It was then that Raffaele Esposito of Pizzeria Brandi slapped together a pie representing the three colors of the Italian flag—white mozzarella, red sauce, and green basil—and created the *pizza margherita*. The pizza was a special order for the visiting Queen Margherita of Savoy, who, tired of fancy French dishes, desired something more representative of the local cuisine. So pleased was she with the pie that she sent a letter of appreciation to Esposito. So flattered was Esposito that he named the pizza in the queen's honor. From then on, pizza became a dish fit for everyone, from the *hoi polloi* to the fanciest of diners.

Because this food of the streets found its fame in a highfalutin innovation, few Neapolitan *pizzaioli* are so sanctimonious that they don't mix things up occasionally. At Pizzeria La Notizia in the city's affluent Vomero district, lauded *pizzaiolo* Enzo Coccia serves us the *pizza del contadino*, a rustic calzone, puffed up like a fairy-tale clamshell and stuffed with warm escarole tossed in anchovies, pecorino cheese, and buffalo mozzarella. Giuseppe Starita is another mastermind of whimsical forms: the *porto e porto*, creased-over dough with fresh ricotta in one side and bitter broccoli rabe in the other, with orbs of buffalo mozzarella in between; the *pistacchio e mortadella*,

made with pistachio pesto and Italian bologna; and his *pièce de résistance*, the *rachetta*, a tennis racket-shaped creation, its calzone "handle" stuffed with ricotta, mozzarella, and mushrooms, its pizza "net" topped with more mozzarella, pecorino romano, basil, and olive oil.

Given such lavish pies, I can do little for days beyond open my mouth for another bite. But I've come here seeking not just indulgent food, but food for thought, so Roberto takes me to the town of Recale 22 miles northeast of the city to check in on his friends, brothers Enzo and Lello Giustiniani, who own Pizzeria Capatosta. When we arrive, they are just firing up the oven with splits of beechwood and oak. Enzo tells me that the *forno* will be ready once the black soot along the sides turns white, at which point the oven will have reached between 825 and 875 degrees.

With no one around, I ask Lello if I can get behind the counter and make a pizza of my own. Working at my side, he reaches for two mounds of dough: yeast, salt, and flour left to rise and develop flavor for 12 hours (some *pizzaioli* wait up to 48). If handled properly, he tells me, it will be light and airy when baked. He shows me how to press my fingertips ever so gently from the center outward toward the edges, flattening it gradually and forming a half-inch-wide crust. Then we flop the dough over our hands several times, gingerly stretching it until it's roughly ten inches in diameter. The hard part is manipulating it gently enough so as not to overstretch it, which results in a wet and flimsy pie, its bottom too thin to support the sauce.

That sauce—tangy, fruity, and earthy all at once—amounts to nothing more than canned whole peeled tomatoes puréed in a food processor with some salt. I swirl on a ladleful, then sprinkle on shredded *fior di latte*, a cows' milk cheese that the Giustinianis prefer for its lower fat content, which makes for even melting. Finishing off with three fat basil leaves, I tug my creation from the lightly floured marble countertop onto a long oar-like peel, a process that stretches it so dramatically that I know I'm destined for failure.

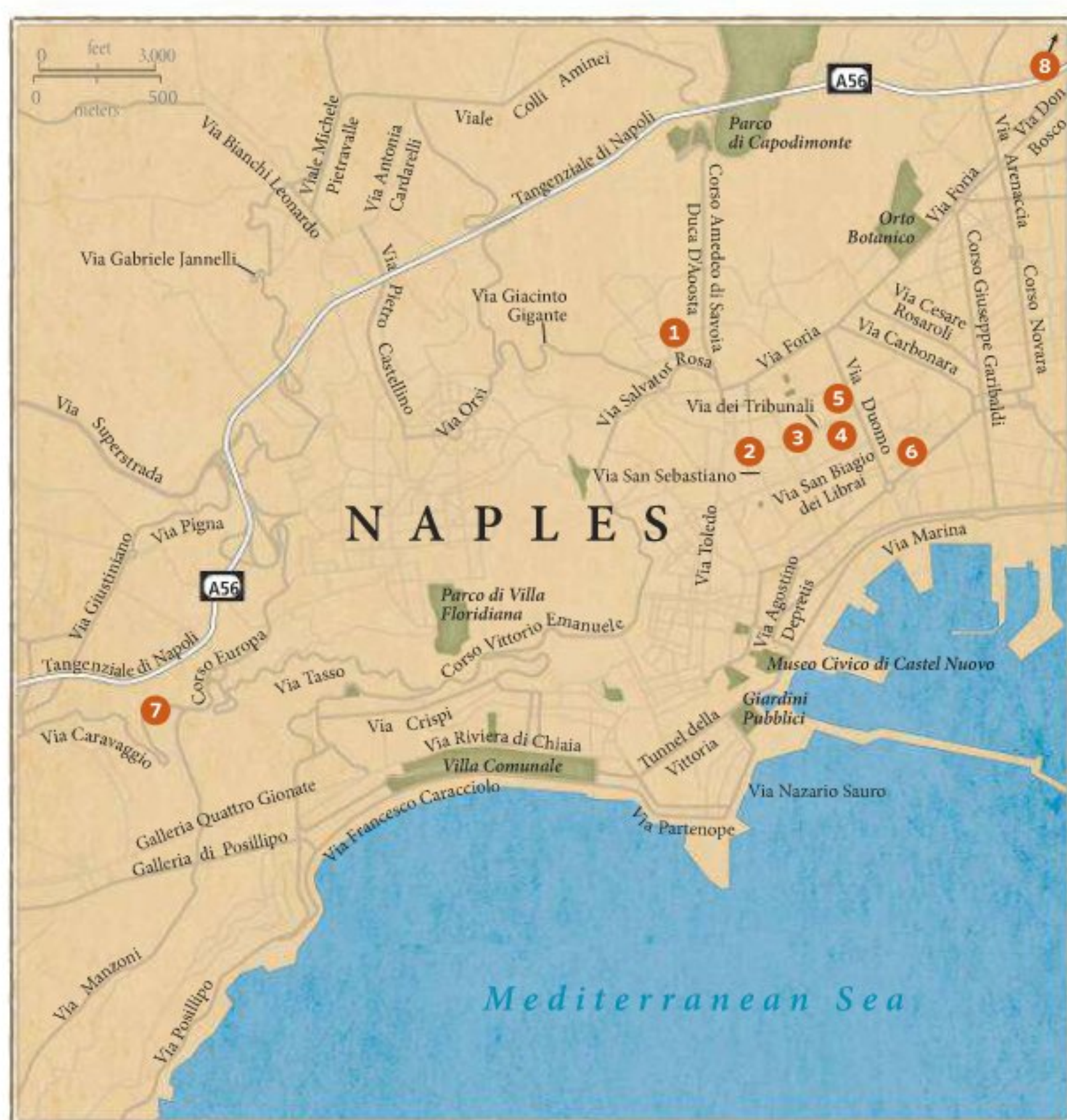
After just 90 seconds in the oven, our pies are done. While Lello's is perfect, mine comes out elongated, soupy, and downright ugly. "Eh," Lello shrugs. "It's your first time." I wasn't expecting great things here. It takes years of apprenticeship before one is considered a true *pizzaiolo* in Naples, and I'm just getting started. I carry my shame into the dining room to gleefully devour its imperfections. From the corner of my eye I see Lello's daughters Alice and Simona, who work here as waitresses, giggling at my failure, which is fine. I've just made pizza alongside a real Neapolitan pro. Nothing can spoil this.

It is not until the next day, my last in Naples, that I realize my hero worship goes beyond the *pizzaioli*; in my pizza fetish, there is a familial connection to this city. Stopping in at its oldest pizza shop, Pizzeria Port'Alba, opened in 1830, I order a simple *portafoglio*, its blistered, springy crust folded over the delectable topping. Devouring the saucy slice as I stroll, I let myself disappear into the crowd and think about how my great-grandfather might have ordered pizza from this very same place. Going in for my last bite, I imagine, for one moment, that I am him. 🍕



NAPLES, ITALY

Dinner for two with drinks and tip: \$25 to \$40



For more information on visiting Naples, visit the Italian Tourism web-site at italiantourism.us.

WHERE TO STAY

Grand Hotel Parker's

Corso Vittorio Emanuele 135 (39/081/761-2474; grandhotelparkers.com). \$129 and up for a double. Opened in 1870, this historic hotel in the residential Corso Vittorio Emanuele neighborhood is within walking distance of museums, shopping, and plenty of pizzerias. Elegant two-story rooms feature antique furniture and balconies overlooking the Gulf of Naples. At the hotel's restaurant, George's, chef Vincenzo Baciottieracino serves excellent Neapolitan dishes

such as *mozzarella di bufala tonnato*, buffalo mozzarella in tuna sauce.

Royal Continental Hotel

Via Partenope 38 (39/081/245-2068; royalgroup.it). \$180 for a double. This hotel located in Santa Lucia, a neighborhood filled with seafood restaurants and historic sites, offers stylish, contemporary rooms, a saltwater pool, and a top-notch restaurant where chef Raimondo Cinque offers Mediterranean classics such as *ensalata di mare con olio e limone*, seafood salad with olive oil and lemon.

WHERE TO EAT

Antica Pizzeria Port'Alba

Via Port'Alba 18 (39/081/459-713;

anticapizzeriaristoranteportalba.com). While Naples' oldest pizzeria offers a full-service dining room, you couldn't do better than to visit the 183-year-old place, grab a small, folded *portafoglio* pizza wrapped in paper, and eat it while walking around the block, where you'll find an incredible selection of new and antiquarian bookstores.

Di Matteo

Via dei Tribunali 94 (39/081/455-262). Opened in 1936, this combination pizzeria-friggitoria (fried-food specialist) in the historic district is where President Bill Clinton wolfed down a pizza back in 1994 (and, boy, do they have the pictures to prove it). Here you can buy scrumptious fried rice balls and pasta-filled fritters to enjoy on the street, or settle into one of the quiet dining rooms for a superb *pizza margherita*.

Il Pizzaiolo del Presidente

Via dei Tribunali 120/121 (39/081/210-903; ilpizzaiolodelpresidente.com). Run by effervescent pizzaiolo Enzo Cacialli, this two-story pizzeria just down the block from Di Matteo is a welcoming spot to sample some of the city's most beloved pies. Cacialli's talents are beautifully exhibited in his simple *pizza marinara*, its pillowy crust topped with sweet tomato sauce, garlic, wild marjoram, olive oil, and basil.

L'Antica Pizzeria da Michele

Via Cesare Sersale 1-3 (39/081/553-9204; damichele.net). The purists at this famous pizzeria that first opened in 1906 serve only *margherita* and *marinara* pizzas. Both are spectacular enough to make one ask, why serve anything else?

Pizzeria Capatosta

Via Guglielmo Marconi 80, Recale, Caserta (39/0823/493-18; pizzeriacapatosta.it). This homey pizzeria about 20 miles northeast of Naples in the scenic town of Recale features a large wood-paneled dining room brimming with trophies won by brothers Enzo and Lello Giustiniani for their pizzas. Those pies, as well as the excellent antipasti offered here, are worth the trip.

Pizzeria Gino Sorbillo

Via dei Tribunali 32 (39/081/446-643; sorbillo.it). This place is usually packed with locals, tourists, and students from the nearby University of Naples. One of the city's most lauded pizzerias since its opening in 1935, the shop suffered a massive fire last year. Happily, after a quick remodel, it's back in action with a cheery, modernized dining area and great *marinara* pizzas.

Pizzeria Starita

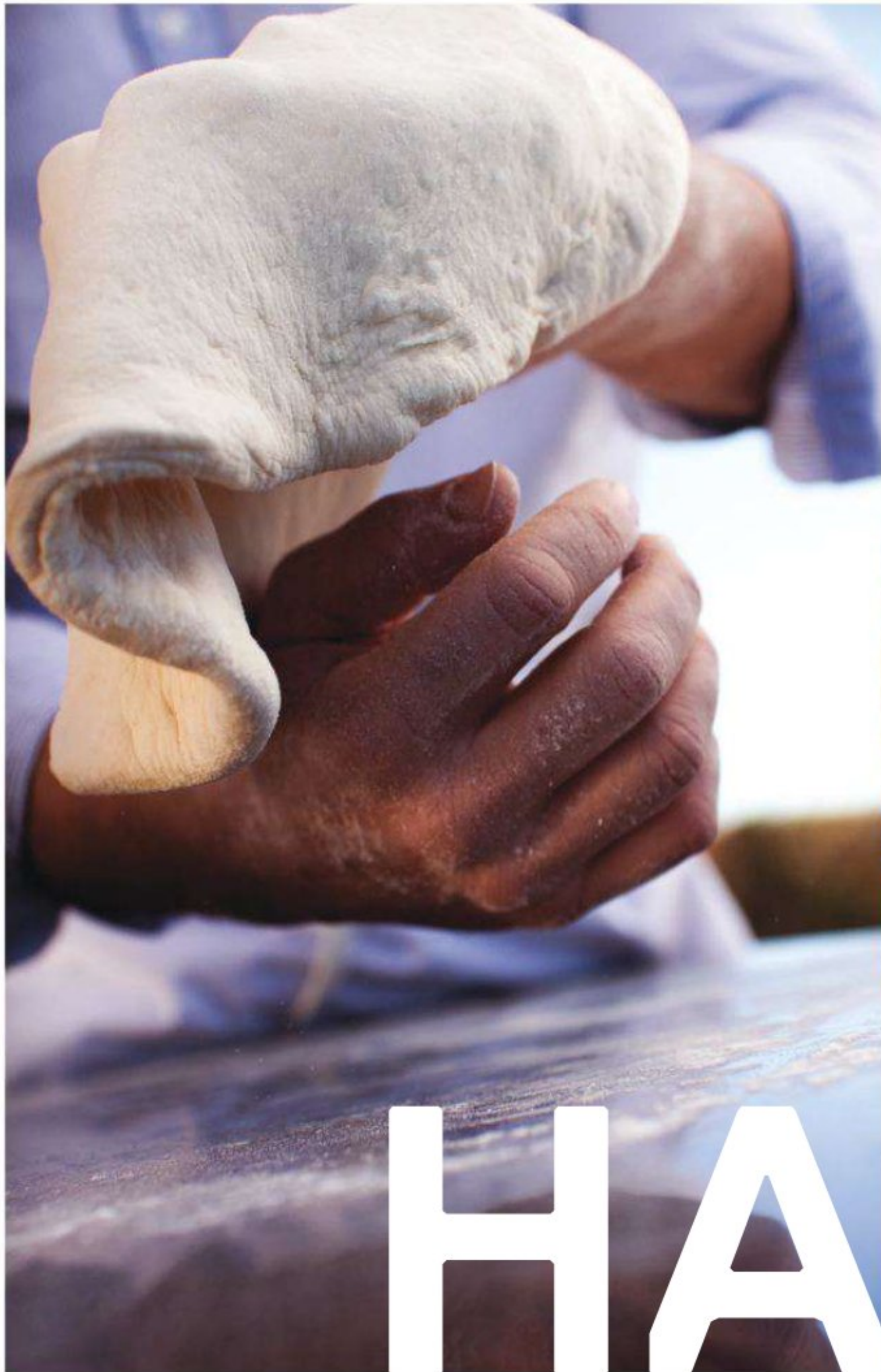
Via Materdei 27 (39/081/557-3682; pizzeriastarita.it). Antonio Starita and his son Giuseppe fire up some of Naples' best pizza pies, from the classic *marinara* to the lightly fried *Montanara* Starita at this bustling pizzeria, the setting of the classic 1954 Sophia Loren film *L'Oro di Napoli*. Don't miss out on the *rachetta*, a tennis racket-shaped pizza-calzone hybrid lavished with cheese and mushrooms.

Pizzeria La Notizia

Via Caravaggio 53 (39/081/714-2155; enzococcia.it). In the high-end Vomero district, pizzaiolo Enzo Coccia serves beautifully rendered classics, as well as the whimsical *pizza del contadino*, a calzone stuffed with warm escarole tossed with sardines, pecorino cheese, and *mozzarella di bufala*. —K.P.

Below, from left: the exterior of Di Matteo, a pizzeria on Naples' Via dei Tribunali; a waiter at Il Pizzaiolo del Presidente with *pizza margherita*; slicing a pie fresh from the oven at Pizzeria La Notizia; Filomena Starita, the daughter of Antonio Starita and an owner of Pizzeria Starita.





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THE PIZZAIOLO ARSENAL

In its birthplace, pizza is created with time-honored techniques that nail the basics: dough, sauce, and cheese. Though *pizzaioli* don't generally make their own cheese, the dough and sauce are preparations they must master. The two recipes below are not only essential to making delicious Naples-style pizza, they're wonderful for other dishes, too. The sauce goes great on pasta and bruschetta, and the dough is a treat when fried.

Salsa di Pomodoro Fresco

(Naples-Style Pizza Sauce)

MAKES ABOUT 4 CUPS

Neapolitan *pizzaioli* use an uncooked tomato sauce based on whole peeled tomatoes straight from the can, which preserves the bright taste and color of the tomatoes.

- 2 28-oz. cans whole peeled tomatoes (packed in purée; see [page 80](#) for more information)
- 2 tbsp. kosher salt

1 Remove each tomato from the can and reserve 3 cups of the purée. Cut the tomatoes in half and, using your fingers, remove and discard the seeds (don't rinse).

2 Place the tomatoes in a food processor and pulse until just crushed but not puréed. (Alternatively, crush the tomatoes by hand or pass them through a food mill.)

3 Transfer the tomato sauce to a bowl and stir in the reserved 3 cups of purée and salt.

Pasta da Pizza

(Naples-Style Pizza Dough)

MAKES FOUR 12-OZ. BALLS

The secret to making this pizza dough is to let it slowly rise in the refrigerator for 48 hours—that's what gives it its deep flavor and tender structure.

- 2 tbsp. sugar
- 1 tbsp. olive oil, plus more
- ½ tsp. active dry yeast
- 5½ cups "00" flour, preferably Caputo Pizzeria Flour (see [page 84](#))
- 2 tbsp. kosher salt

1 Combine sugar, oil, yeast, and 2 cups cold water in bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook; let sit until foamy, 8–10 minutes. Mix flour and salt in a bowl. With motor running, slowly add flour mixture; mix until a smooth dough forms, 8–10 minutes. Transfer dough to a greased baking sheet; cover with plastic wrap. Let sit at room temperature 1 hour.

2 Divide dough into 4 balls; transfer to a greased 9" x 13" dish; brush tops with oil. Cover with plastic wrap; refrigerate 48 hours.

Pizza

Calzone di Prosciutto e Ricotta

(Ham and Cheese Calzone)

SERVES 1–2

This hefty calzone (pictured on [page 40](#)) is stuffed with ricotta and two types of cured pork, and topped with a tangy tomato sauce.

- 1 ball Naples-style pizza dough (see above)
- Fine semolina, for dusting
- ½ cup ricotta
- 1½ oz. thinly sliced cooked Italian ham, cut into ¼" strips
- 1½ oz. thinly sliced hard salami, cut into ¼" strips
- ¼ cup grated pecorino romano
- ⅓ cup Naples-style pizza sauce (see above)
- 2–3 fresh basil leaves

Place a pizza stone under the broiler; heat for 30 minutes. Dust dough with semolina; roll into an 8" x 10"

rectangle and transfer to a semolina-dusted pizza peel. Spread ricotta over dough, leaving a 1" border. Distribute the ham, salami, and half the pecorino over the top. Fold in half; pinch edges closed. Spread sauce over top; sprinkle with remaining pecorino, plus basil leaves. Slide calzone onto stone; broil until crust is puffed and charred in spots, 2–3 minutes. Serve hot.

Montanara Starita

(Fried Pizza with Marinara Sauce)

MAKES FOUR 10" PIZZAS

This signature of both Naples' Starita and New York City's Don Antonio pizzerias (pictured on [page 49](#)) is at first fried, then slathered in a rich marinara sauce before it's quickly baked to melt the mozzarella.

- ⅓ cup olive oil, plus more
- 1 tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 8 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 28-oz. cans whole peeled tomatoes (packed in purée;

see [page 80](#) for more information), crushed by hand

- 3 sprigs basil, plus 16–20 leaves

Kosher salt, to taste

Canola oil, for frying

- 1 recipe Naples-style pizza dough (see left)

Fine semolina, for dusting

- 1 lb. smoked mozzarella, shredded

- ¼ cup grated pecorino romano

1 Heat olive oil, chile flakes, and garlic in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat; cook until garlic is golden, about 1 minute. Add tomatoes, basil sprigs, and salt; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium; cook, until sauce is slightly thick, 35–40 minutes. Discard basil.

2 Place a pizza stone under the broiler; heat for 30 minutes. Pour enough canola oil into an 8-qt. saucepan to reach a depth of 2". Heat until a deep-fry thermometer reads 350°. Working in 4 batches, dust 1 ball dough with semolina. Using your fingertips, press dough into a 10" circle about ¼" thick, leaving a 1" crust around the edges. Hold dough straight up, and with fingertips circling crust, slide fingers around crust in a circular motion as you would turn a steering wheel until dough in the center is stretched to about ⅛" thick. Using a fork, poke holes all over the dough; gently lower into oil. Fry, flipping once, until golden and puffed, 1–2 minutes. Transfer to a pizza peel; spread ½ cup sauce over dough. Distribute a quarter each of the cheeses and basil leaves; drizzle with oil. Slide pizza onto stone; broil until cheese melts, about 1–1½ minutes. Serve hot.

Noci e Zucchini

(Walnut Pesto and Zucchini Pizza)

MAKES FOUR 10" PIZZAS

Creamy walnut sauce is paired with golden pan-fried zucchini and smoked mozzarella on this pizza (pictured on [page 41](#)).

- 1½ cups walnut halves
- 3 tbsp. grated Parmesan
- 1 cup olive oil, plus more
- ⅓ cup heavy cream
- Kosher salt, to taste
- ½ tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 2 small zucchini, thinly sliced
- 1 recipe Naples-style pizza dough (see above, left)
- Fine semolina, for dusting
- 1 lb. smoked mozzarella, thinly sliced
- 16 fresh basil leaves
- 16 squash blossoms (optional)

1 Purée walnuts, Parmesan, ⅓ cup oil, cream, and salt in a food processor until smooth. Heat remaining oil, plus chile flakes in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add zucchini and salt; cook until golden, 8–10 minutes.

2 Place a pizza stone under the broiler; heat for 30 minutes. Working in 4 batches, dust 1 ball dough with semolina. Using your fingertips, press dough into a 10" circle about ¼" thick, leaving a 1" crust around the edges. Hold dough straight up, and with fingertips circling crust, slide fingers around crust in a circular motion as you would turn a steering wheel until dough in the center is stretched to about ⅛" thick; transfer to a semolina-dusted pizza peel. Spread ½ cup walnut sauce over dough and distribute a quarter each of the zucchini, cheese, basil leaves, and squash blossoms, if using; drizzle with oil. Slide pizza onto stone; bake until cheese melts and crust is puffed and charred in spots, 3–4 minutes. Serve hot.

Pistachio e Mortadella

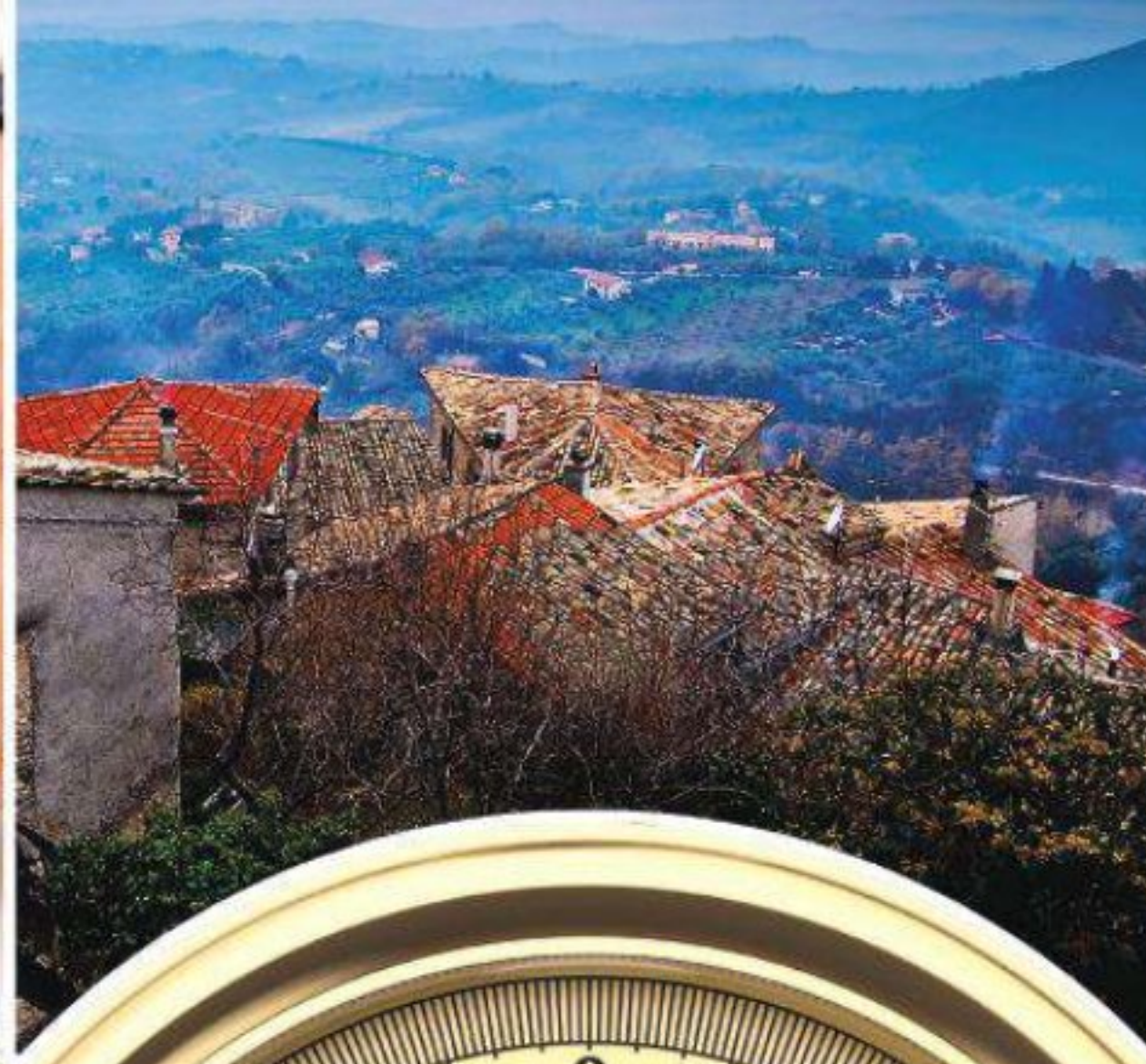
(Pistachio and Mortadella Pizza)

MAKES FOUR 10" PIZZAS

A buttery pistachio purée bolsters this mortadella and mozzarella pizza (pictured on [page 49](#)).

- 1½ cups shelled pistachios
- ½ tbsp. grated Parmesan
- ½ cup olive oil, plus more to taste
- 3 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 1 recipe Naples-style pizza dough (see above, left)
- Fine semolina, for dusting
- 4 oz. thinly sliced mortadella, cut into quarters
- 1 lb. fresh mozzarella, thinly sliced
- 1 oz. grated pecorino romano
- 16 fresh basil leaves

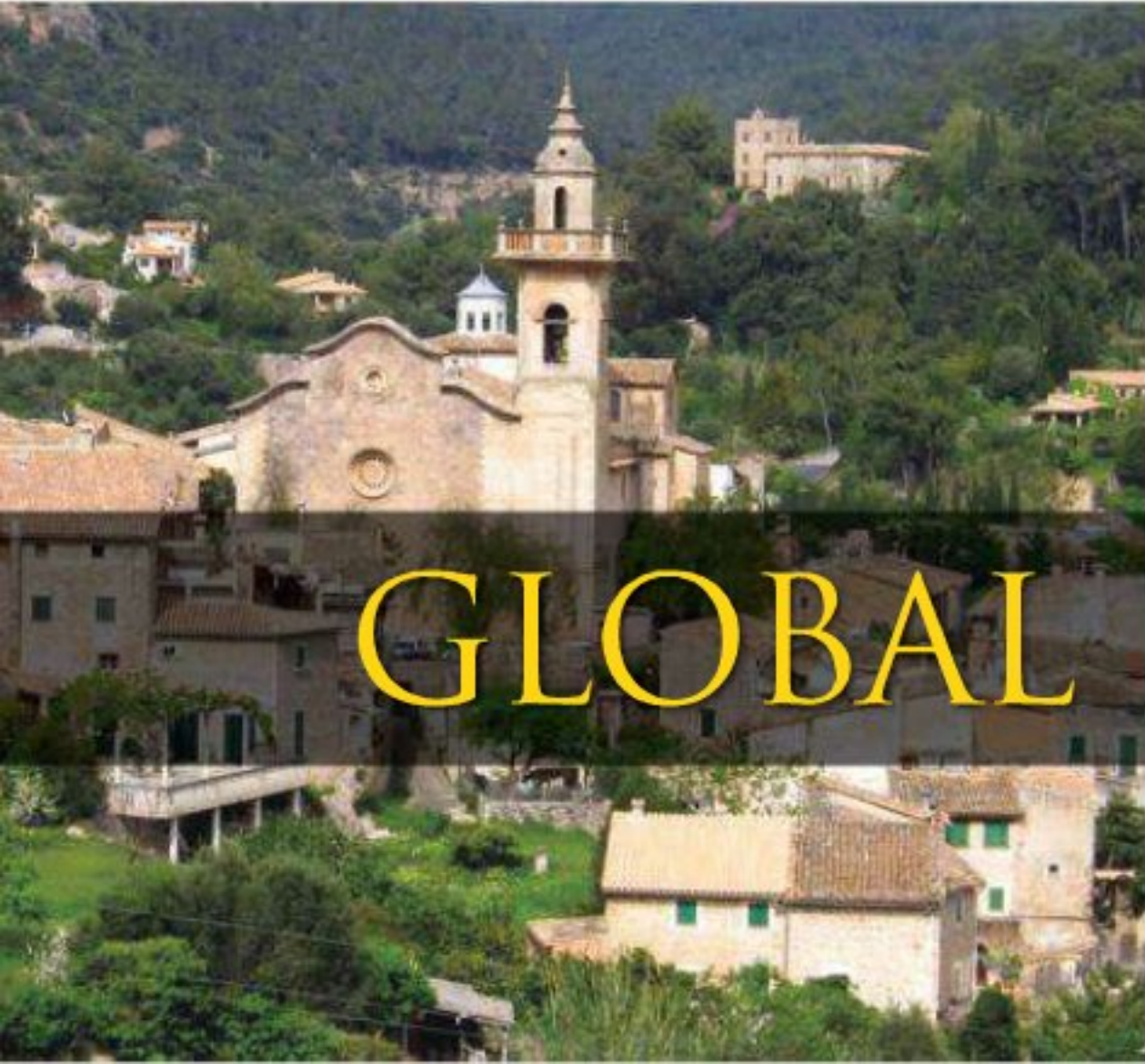
Place a pizza stone under the broiler; heat for 30 minutes. Purée pistachios, Parmesan, oil, lemon juice, salt, and ¼ cup water in a food processor until smooth. Working in 4 batches, dust 1 ball dough with semolina. Using your fingertips, press dough into a 10" circle about ¼" thick, leaving a 1" crust around the edges. Hold dough straight up, and with fingertips circling crust, slide fingers around crust in a circular motion as you would turn a steering wheel until dough in the center is stretched to about ⅛" thick; transfer to a semolina-dusted



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pizza peel. Spread ½ cup pistachio purée over dough and distribute a quarter each of the mortadella, cheeses, and basil over the top; drizzle with oil. Slide pizza onto stone; broil until cheese melts and crust is puffed and charred in spots, 3–4 minutes. Serve hot.

Pizza del Papa

(Butternut Squash and Smoked Mozzarella Pizza)

MAKES FOUR 10" PIZZAS

Antonio Starita, the owner of Pizzeria Starita in Naples, served this butternut squash–topped pizza (pictured on page 42) to Pope John Paul II.

- 1 small butternut squash (about 1 lb.), peeled, seeded, and cut into 1" pieces
- ¾ cup olive oil, plus more
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 1½ lb. smoked mozzarella, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp. ricotta
- 2 tbsp. heavy cream
- 1 tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 2 small zucchini, thinly sliced
- 1 each red and yellow bell peppers, stemmed, seeded, and cut into 1" pieces
- 1 recipe Naples-style pizza dough (see page 52)
- Fine semolina, for dusting
- 16 fresh basil leaves

1 Heat oven to 500°. Toss butternut squash with ¼ cup olive oil and salt on a baking sheet; bake until tender, 20–25 minutes. Transfer to a food processor with ¼ lb. mozzarella, plus ricotta, cream, and salt; purée until smooth. Heat ¼ cup oil and chile flakes in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add zucchini and salt; cook until golden, 8–10 minutes, and transfer to a bowl. Add remaining oil to skillet; return to medium-high heat. Add peppers; cook until golden, 5–7 minutes.

2 Place a pizza stone under the broiler; heat for 30 minutes. Working in 4 batches, dust 1 ball dough with semolina. Using your fingertips, press dough into a 10" circle about ¼" thick, leaving a 1" crust around the edges. Hold dough straight up, and with fingertips circling crust, slide fingers around crust in a circular motion as you would turn a steering wheel until dough in the center is stretched to about ⅛" thick; transfer to a semolina-dusted pizza peel. Spread ½ cup squash purée over dough and distribute a quarter each of the zucchini, peppers, and remaining cheese, plus basil leaves; drizzle with oil. Slide pizza onto

stone; broil until cheese melts and crust is puffed and charred in spots, 3–4 minutes. Serve hot.

★ Pizza Margherita

(Tomato, Basil, and Mozzarella Pizza)

MAKES FOUR 10" PIZZAS

This most iconic of pizzas (pictured on page 49) is topped with tomato sauce, fresh mozzarella, and basil leaves, the colors of the Italian flag.

- 1 recipe Naples-style pizza dough (see page 52)
- Fine semolina, for dusting
- 1 recipe Naples-style pizza sauce (see page 52)
- 1 lb. fresh mozzarella, thinly sliced
- 16 fresh basil leaves
- Olive oil, to taste

Place a pizza stone under the broiler; heat for 30 minutes. Working in 4 batches, dust 1 ball dough with semolina. Using your fingertips, press dough into a 10" circle about ¼" thick, leaving a 1" crust around the edges. Hold dough straight up, and with fingertips circling crust, slide fingers around crust in a circular motion as you would turn a steering wheel until dough in the center is stretched to about ⅛" thick; transfer to a semolina-dusted pizza peel. Spread ½ cup sauce over dough, and distribute a quarter each of the cheese and basil leaves; drizzle with oil. Slide pizza onto stone; broil until cheese melts and crust is puffed and charred in spots, 3–4 minutes. Serve hot.

Rachetta

(Racket-Shaped Pizza with Mushrooms and Tomatoes)

MAKES 1 PIZZA

A portion of the crust is stuffed with earthy roasted mushrooms to mimic a tennis racket handle in this whimsical pizza (pictured on page 49).

- 3 oz. mixed mushrooms, such as cremini, shiitake, and white button, thinly sliced
- ½ cup olive oil, plus more
- 2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 2 sprigs oregano
- 2 sprigs thyme
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 5 cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 ball Naples-style pizza dough (see page 52)
- Fine semolina, for dusting
- ¼ cup ricotta
- ¼ cup grated pecorino romano
- 2 oz. fresh mozzarella, thinly sliced
- 4–5 fresh basil leaves

1 Heat oven to 450°. Toss mushrooms with half each of the oil and garlic, plus oregano and thyme, salt, and pepper on a baking sheet. Bake until well browned, 10–12 minutes; discard oregano and thyme. Toss tomatoes with remaining oil and garlic, plus salt and pepper; set aside.

2 Place a pizza stone under the broiler; heat for 30 minutes. Dust 1 ball dough with semolina. Using your fingertips, press dough into a 10" circle about ¼" thick, leaving a 1" crust around the edges. Hold dough straight up, and with fingertips circling crust, slide fingers around crust in a circular motion as you would turn a steering wheel until dough in the center is stretched to about ⅛" thick; transfer to a semolina-dusted pizza peel. Place mushrooms on one quarter of the circle; fold dough over mushrooms and pinch to seal making a flat "handle." Spread ricotta over the remaining circle of dough and distribute cheeses, tomatoes, and basil leaves; drizzle with oil. Slide pizza onto stone; broil until cheese melts and crust is puffed and charred in spots, 3–4 minutes. Serve hot.

Appetizers

Angioletti Fritti con Rucola e Pomodori

(Fried Dough with Arugula and Grape Tomatoes)

SERVES 2–4

A simple salad adds fresh contrast to fried strips of pizza dough (pictured on page 49).

- ⅓ cup olive oil
- ½ tsp. dried oregano
- 4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Canola oil, for frying
- 1 ball Naples-style pizza dough (see page 52)
- Fine semolina, for dusting
- 4½ cups baby arugula

1 Mix oil, oregano, garlic, tomatoes, salt, and pepper in a bowl and set aside.

2 Pour enough canola oil into a 6-qt. saucepan to reach a depth of 2". Heat until a deep-fry thermometer reads 350°. Dust dough with semolina, and roll dough into a 4" x 9" rectangle about ⅓" thick. Cut dough into ½" x 2" strips. Fry strips, until puffed and golden, 3–4 minutes. Drain; toss with tomatoes and

their juices, arugula, salt, and pepper. Divide into bowls and serve.

Frittatine di Pasta

(Spaghetti Fritters with Ham and Smoked Mozzarella)

MAKES 30 FRITTERS

Coiled strands of spaghetti soak up a creamy sauce in these delectable fried ham and cheese fritters (pictured on page 49).

- 10 tbsp. unsalted butter, plus more for greasing
- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 5 cups heavy cream
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 lb. dried spaghetti
- 4 oz. cooked Italian ham, cut into ¼" pieces
- 8 oz. smoked mozzarella, cut into ¼" pieces
- Canola oil, for frying
- 2 cups plain bread crumbs

1 Melt butter in a 1-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add ½ cup flour; cook, stirring, 2 minutes. Add cream; boil. Reduce heat to medium; cook until thickened, 4–5 minutes. Set sauce aside.

2 Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Grease a 9" x 13" baking dish. Cook pasta until al dente, about 7 minutes. Drain and transfer to a bowl. Add reserved sauce, ham, mozzarella, salt, and pepper; mix until combined. Press pasta mixture into baking dish; cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until firm, about 1½ hours.

3 Pour enough canola oil into a 6-qt. saucepan to a depth of 2". Heat until a deep-fry thermometer reads 325°. Whisk remaining flour with 1 cup water into a batter. Put bread crumbs in a bowl. Using a 2" round cutter, cut out 30 rounds out of pasta mixture. Dip rounds in batter; roll in bread crumbs. Fry until golden and crisp, 2–3 minutes. Serve hot.

MAKE PIZZA LIKE A TRUE PRO

See page 79 for even more tips on how to make authentic Neapolitan pizza at home.





BELGIOIOSO FRESH MOZZARELLA is made only a few hours after milking and complements a variety of foods with its unique texture and delicate flavor. Traditionally, this cheese is served with sliced fresh tomatoes, basil and olive oil. It also enhances salads and light meals. Melt onto pizzas or add to any sandwich for a creamy wonderful flavor.

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IN THE GALILEE, BIBLICAL ROOTS, RICH AGRICULTURAL
HERITAGE, AND MEDITERRANEAN FLAVORS GIVE RISE TO
ISRAEL'S MOST SOULFUL CUISINE

by Gabriella Gershenson photographs by Eilon Paz

THE PROMISED LAND

ABOUT AN HOUR OUTSIDE of Tel Aviv, driving north toward the Galilee, the land tells me I am getting closer to my destination. I see neat plots of banana plants and rows of avocado trees. I pass hardy date palms and fish farms with shallow rectangular pools. A stop at a gas station reveals a carob tree growing next to the parking lot and tufts of *za'atar*, a type of wild thyme eaten throughout the Middle East, sprouting from the curb. When I enter the Upper Galilee, subtropical hills and valleys give way to a rocky green vista of olive trees with gnarled, ropy trunks, which could be hundreds of years old. It's good to be back.

I've been to Israel before. I've seen the religious sites. As a Jewish American who spent my childhood attending Hebrew school, I anticipated having an "aha" moment in the old city of Jerusalem, or at the Wailing Wall, the holiest site for Jews. But it wasn't until I first stepped foot in the Galilee nearly ten years ago that I felt that visceral sense of the sacred so many others say they encounter here. The region, stretching from Lebanon in the north to the Jezreel Valley in the south, has been inhabited for more than 3,000 years. Somehow, the place itself telegraphs its antiquity.

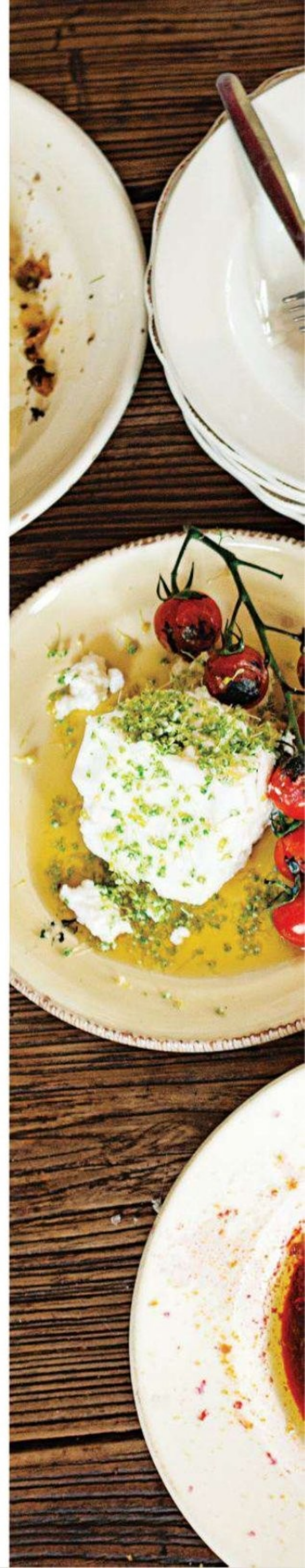
The Galilee was the breadbasket of the biblical period, and more recently, the birthplace of the kibbutz, the 20th-century Jewish farming communes that harnessed the potential of this land, turning it into Israel's most fruitful region. It's also home to some of the most elemental and satisfying foods I've ever eaten: Israeli-style breakfasts of vibrant raw vegetables and soft goats' milk cheeses; specialties like *hummus mashaush*, chickpea-topped hummus swimming in olive oil, and *knafeh*, a syrup-soaked cheese and shredded phyllo pastry, which I sampled in the Arab-Israeli port city of Akko. The cuisine here is influenced by Arabs, Druze, and Bedouins (see "Original Galilee" on [page 63](#)), and even by the Bible. There are flavors from the Jewish diaspora,

from Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. Dishes are executed with the freshness and simplicity that's a hallmark of Mediterranean cooking. To me, it all amounts to Israel's most exciting regional cuisine.

The meal I remember best from an earlier trip to the Galilee was prepared by Erez Komarovsky, who runs a cooking school out of his home. A celebrated Israeli chef, Erez left a thriving business in Tel Aviv to live in Mitzpe Matat, a wilderness minutes from the Lebanon border. I found his way with the foods of this place so profound that I couldn't imagine returning without seeing him.

I ARRIVE AT EREZ'S on a Thursday morning in May. It's just before the harvest festival of Shavuot, which celebrates the bounty of the land. The hills are verdant after the winter rains, and the land is at its most beautiful. Erez, a fit man of 50, comes out to the road wearing jeans and a red T-shirt. He waves me toward his home, which is built into a mountain overlooking villages and valleys. I descend pale stone steps lined with fuchsia (*continued on* [page 60](#))

A meal at the home of the chef Erez Komarovsky in the Upper Galilee. Clockwise from top left: cherry tomatoes with fennel pollen and *sfatit*, an Israeli sheep's milk cheese; roasted eggplant; crusty bread; and beet salad.









Left: a stretch of highway along the Sea of Galilee in northern Israel; above: Lisa Fisher carries a tray of grilled pita topped with *za'atar* spice and olive oil (see [page 66](#) for recipe) at Bustan Chaim, her in-laws' orchard in the Upper Galilee, less than a mile from the Lebanon border.

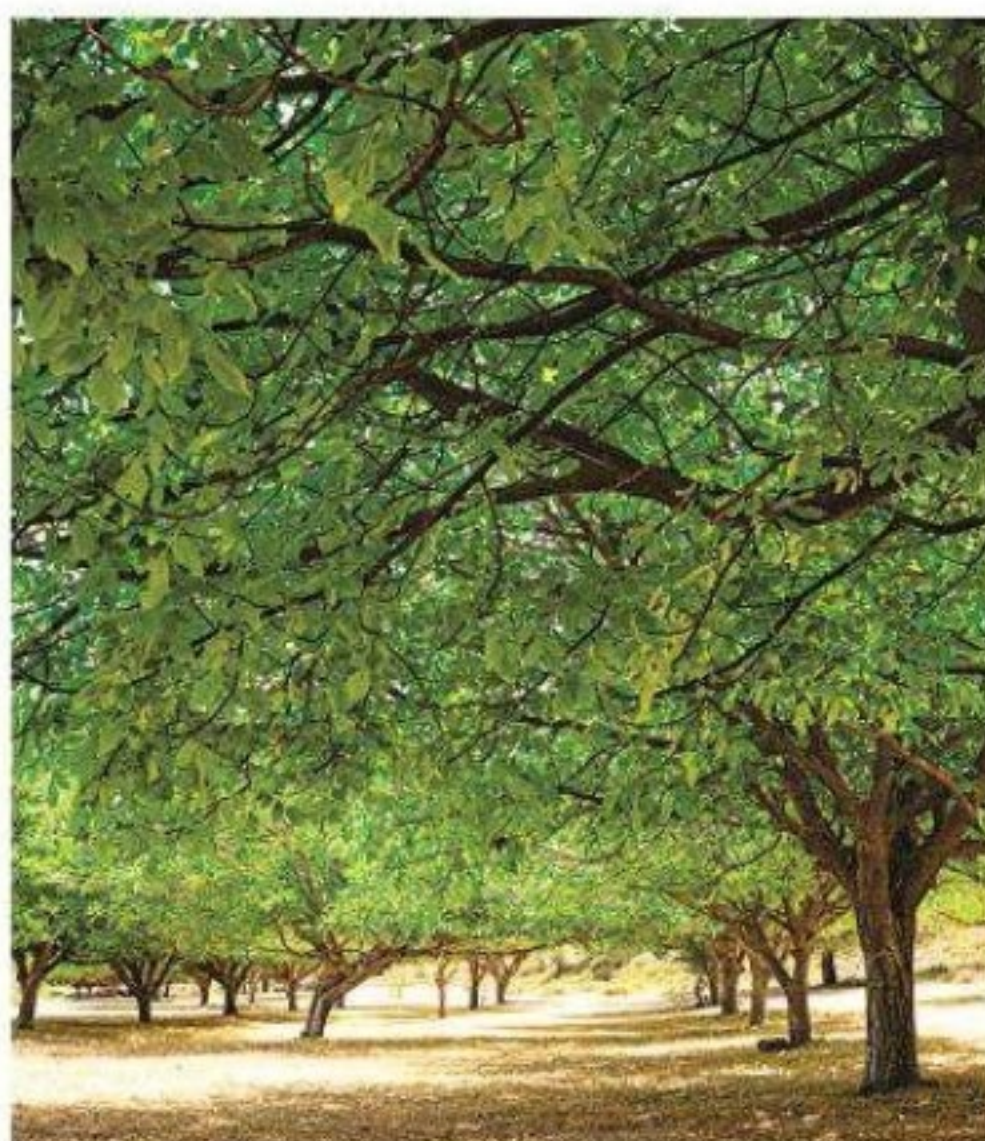
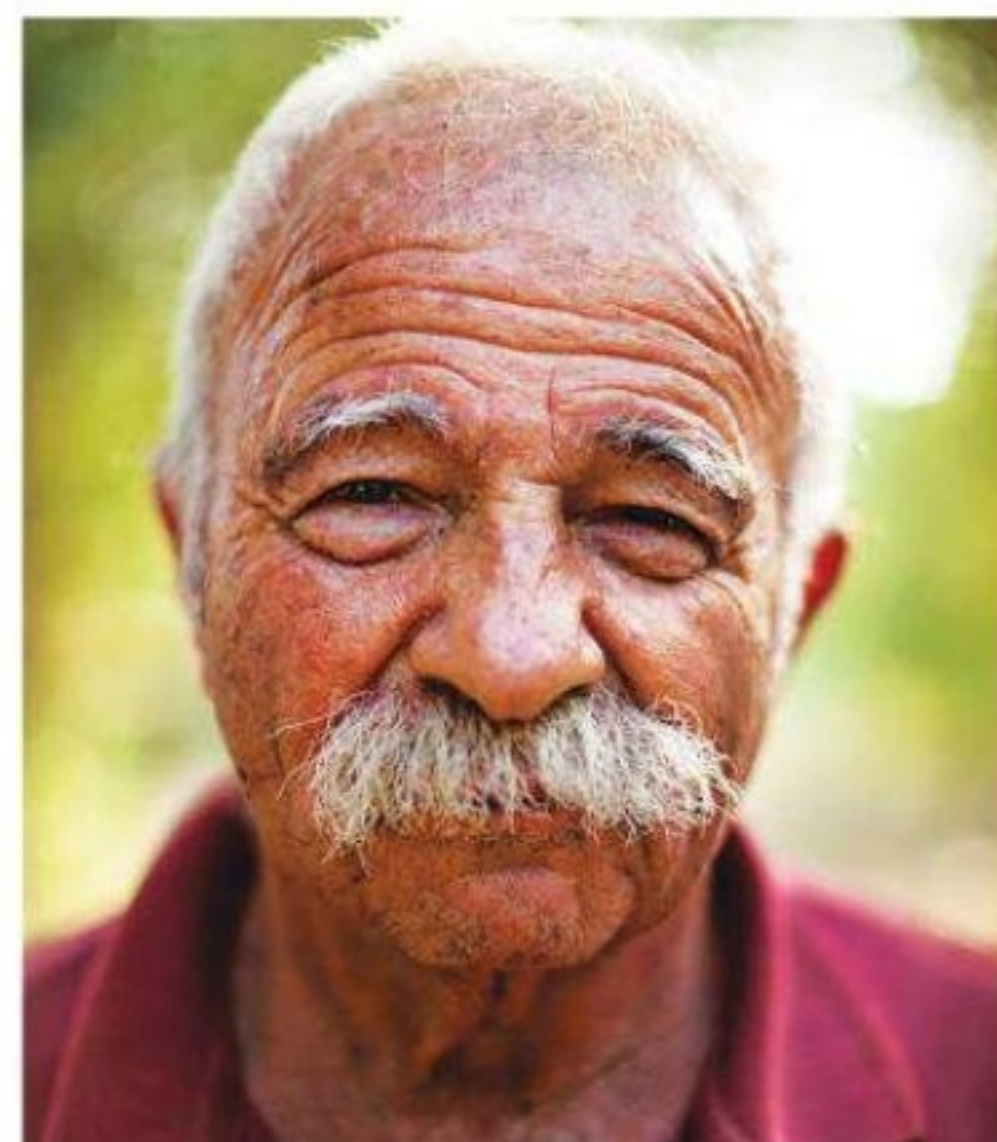
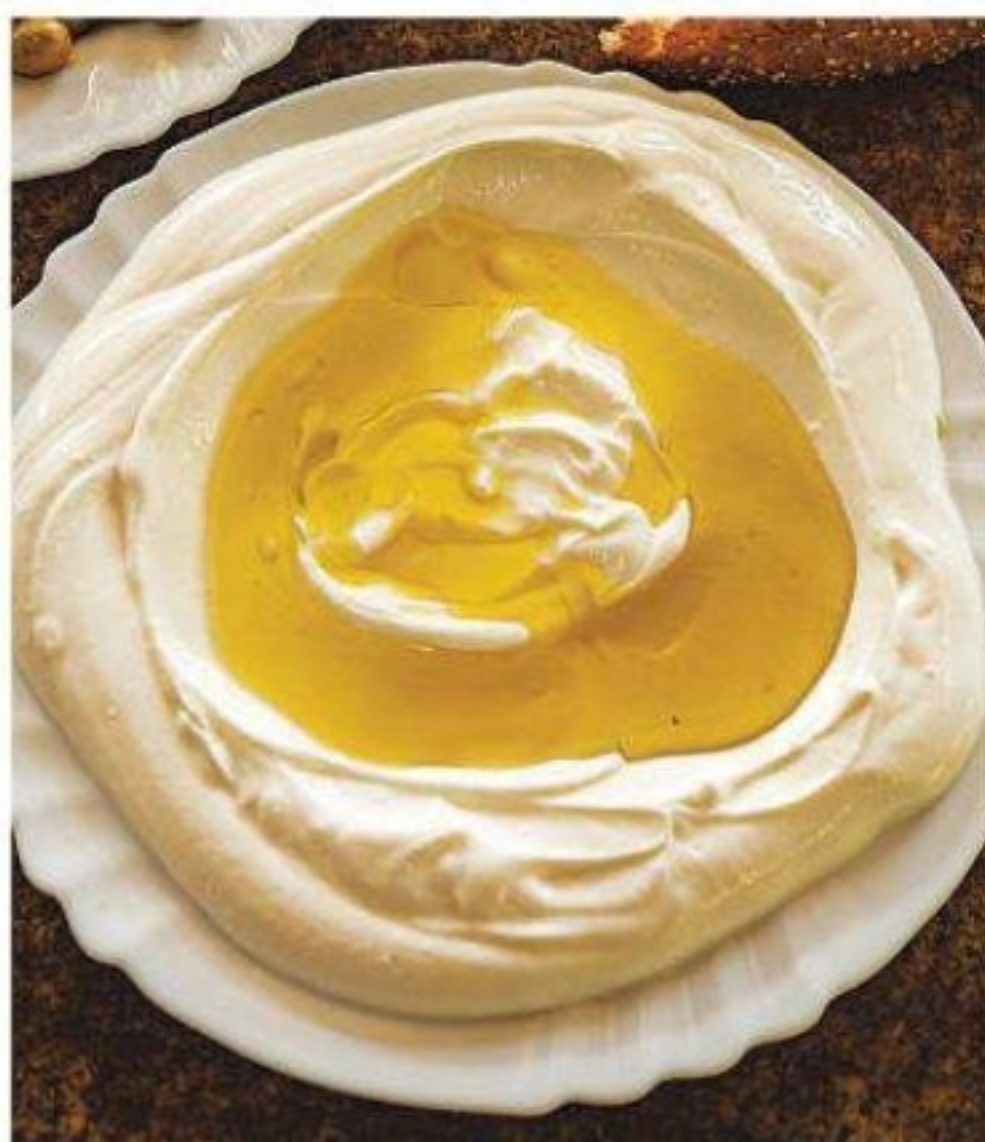
(continued from page 56) blossoms and follow him in. From his kitchen, Erez produces a pot of Turkish coffee and a lacquered roulade filled with crushed almonds and marzipan. The pastry speaks to his background—Erez rose to prominence with Lehem Erez, or “Erez’s Bread,” a chain that heralded the arrival of the artisan bread movement in Israel in the 1990s. “I wanted a simple, more satisfying life,” he tells me. “Wild leaves, lambs and goats, chickens, dogs, cats, and lots of vegetables in my garden.”

These days, Erez lives in a paradise of his own making. As he walks me through his garden to gather ingredients for our meal, he offers me tastes of what he has grown. There is an abundance of everything: herbs and beets and chickpeas; a mulberry tree that we duck under like it’s an umbrella.

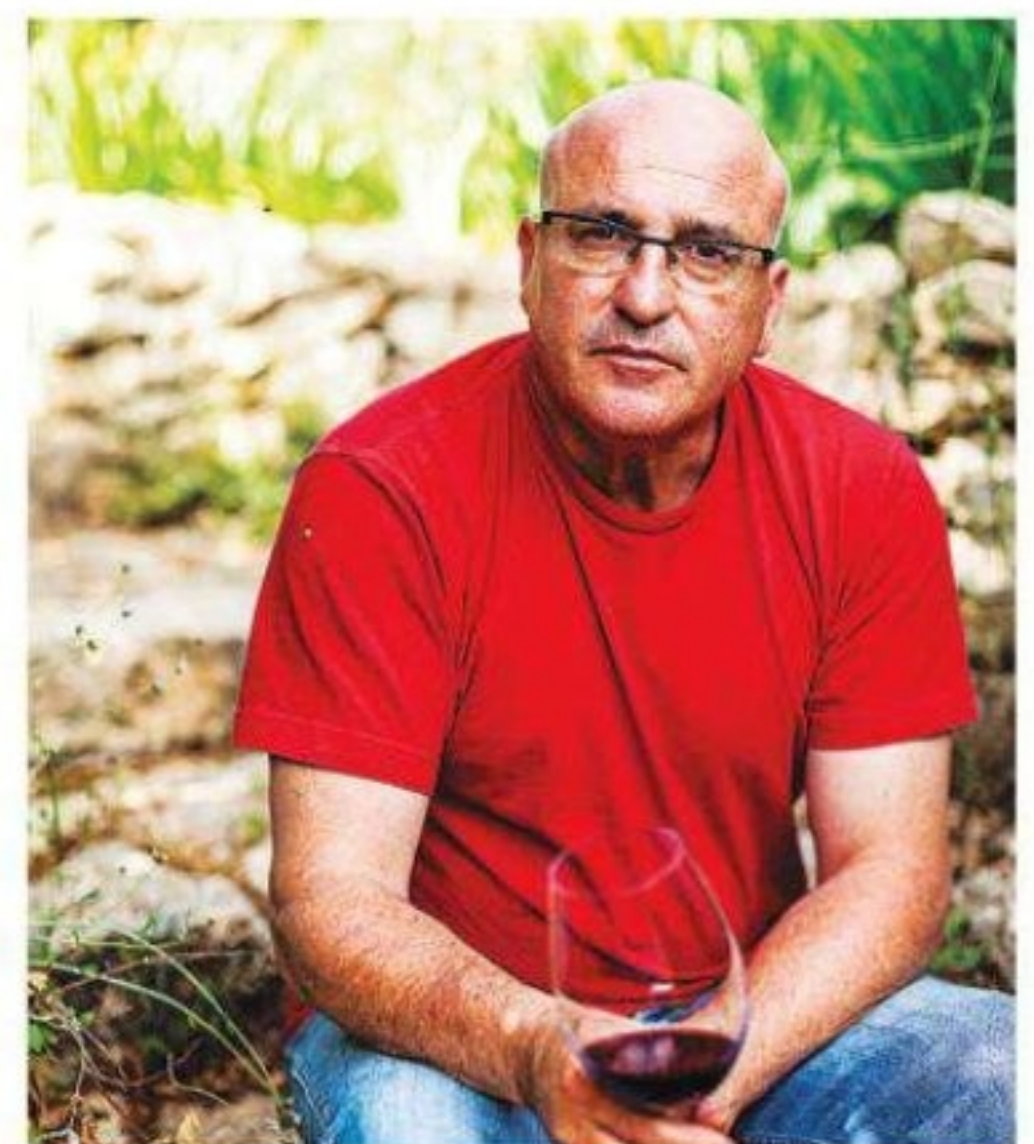
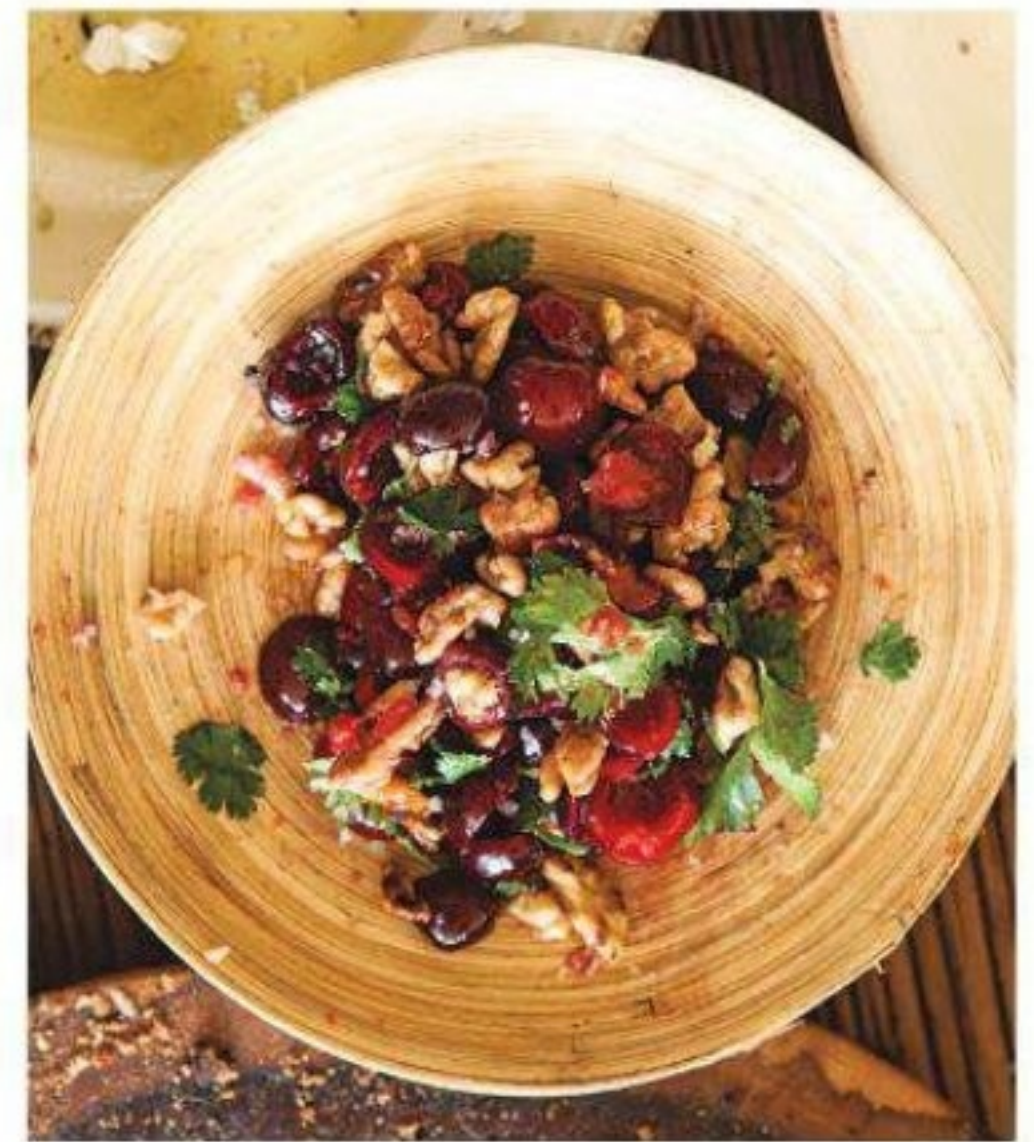
Inside the house, the floor is covered in crates brimming with produce and firewood for the *taboon*, a clay and mud oven that Erez fired up for our lunch. His style of cooking is powerful and spontaneous. He uses just a mortar and pestle, fire, and his hands. To make a cherry and herb salad, he singes hot peppers to intensify their flavor, splits each cherry along its seam, tears cilantro, and breaks walnuts between his fingers. He does the same with eggplant, which he chars, peels in one motion, and plates with jagged halves of soft-boiled egg and *zhug*, a Yemenite chile paste.

When everything is ready, Erez and I dig in. The cherry and herb salad is zesty and sweet. The recipe is from the Turks, Erez says, who occupied this land for centuries. The roasted eggplant, meanwhile, tastes smoky and fresh, the combination of nutty tahini, hot chiles, and garlic one you’d find all over the Middle East. “In the Galilee, the influences are not from abroad but from the Druze and Arabs living here,” Erez explains. “The richness of the culinary knowledge that I get here is unparalleled to what you get in the big city.” Here, Erez picks mushrooms with Jewish Moroccans and Kurds, makes goat cheese out of milk from a Druze neighbor, and buys the foods they forage. Because of the divisions inherent in modern Israeli life, and the tensions between Arabs and Jews, his culinary curiosity feels like a political act, one that emphasizes the way the land connects the people. Before I leave, Erez tells me, “Borders are politics. Borders do not cut the food.”

THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON, I meet my friend Lior Lev Sercarz, a 41-year-old silver-haired chef who owns a spice shop in Manhattan but grew up in the Upper Galilee. When I found out he’d be here visiting his family, I convinced him to let me tag along. Today, we’re going to “Parliament,” a social club that Lior’s father, Moshe, belongs to. Started 30 years ago by a group of guys at Ayelet HaShahar, a kibbutz near the Syrian bor-



Top row, from left: *labaneh* with olive oil; Gera Egozi, a member of the Parliament at Ayelet HaShahar, chio trees near the village of Gush Halav; Israeli chopped salad; Moshe Lev Sercarz at his home in the with chile sauce and tahini; Erez Komarovsky’s home kitchen; almond and marzipan roulade; Komar



TODD COLEMAN (ISRAELI CHOPPED SALAD, CHARRED EGGPLANT WITH CHILE SAUCE & TAHINI, CHREIME)

a kibbutz near the town of Kiryat Shmona; *poike*, a Galilean beef stew; *dolma*, grape leaves stuffed with rice; cherry salad with walnuts and cilantro. Middle row: pista-Upper Galilee; *chreime*, spicy Tunisian fish stew; Turkish coffee at the Parliament. Bottom row: *knafeh*, a sweet cheese and shredded phyllo pastry; charred eggplant ovsky at his garden in Mitzpe Matat. (Recipes begin on [page 66](#).)

der, the club is where the men, now mostly in their 50s and 60s, meet on Fridays to talk politics and farming, and to cook a potluck meal made from the foods they've grown.

We arrive at the clubhouse, a crude stone structure with a tin roof and an Israeli flag flying on top. It's growing noisy with greetings and the thuds of wine bottles being placed on the table. Lior's father, a bespectacled man with wavy white hair, approaches us, clutching plump green figs that he offers me and Lior's wife, Lisa, saying they're the first of the season from his trees. I taste one—they're pulpy, fragrant. Moshe's gift carries special meaning. The holiday that starts at sundown tomorrow, Shavuot, is also called Hag ha'Bikkurim, the festival of the first fruits, and marks the beginning of the growing season. Thousands of years ago, farmers like him would bring the first harvest of the seven species named in the Old Testament as models of the land's fertility—wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates—as offerings to the temple in Jerusalem.

Everyone gets started on the meal. There's an easy rhythm to the preparation—though some of the men no longer live on the kibbutz, working together is still second nature. Shlomo Razili, a bearded figure in a cowboy hat, fires up coals in the grill while Yoni Erez, in a black T-shirt, sharpens the knife that Gera Egozi, with a thick mustache and eyes creased into a permanent smile, will use to carve chickens destined for the grill. Behind them, two more men sit and chop green peppers, tomatoes, parsley, cucumbers, and onions into a typical Israeli salad. As they finish, Shlomo squeezes lemons over the vegetables, cupping his hand under the fruit to capture the seeds. Meanwhile, Dror Galili has been making *poike*, a stew cooked over fire in a cast-iron cauldron that layers beef with kohlrabi, turnips, and heaps of other seasonal vegetables. His father was so enamored of the region, he tells me, that when he moved here in 1935, he took its name for his own.

The meal progresses casually. Someone has brought a loaf of challah and *labaneh*, a thick yogurt-like cheese, drizzled with olive oil. We tear off pieces and dunk, and use the same bread to mop up the juices from the salad, which is refreshing and cool. The chicken is served as it comes off the grill. Someone passes a bowl of roasted potatoes; everyone takes them with their fingers. "We share from the same plate," one man says. "You don't mind?" Of course not—this is exactly what I came for.

The last dish to come to the table is the *poike*, and the crowd exclaims at the tender vegetables and savory meat. Now Dror's brother Eli, an avid hunter, claims the grill to cook wild boar. I can't believe he's captured that animal in these hills. This place keeps

From left, Uri Jeremias and Fatmeh Wachesh, in the old port city of Akko in Western Galilee.





ORIGINAL GALILEE

Thanks to modern irrigation systems and other agricultural technologies, Israel's Galilee is a farming powerhouse that today yields everything from kiwis to avocados. But the region's culinary character has roots in ancient traditions that are still practiced here. According to Abbie Rosner, author of *Breaking Bread in Galilee* (Hilayon Press, 2012), before the formation of Israel in 1948, the Arabs, Bedouins, and Druze (an ancient religious sect) who make up nearly half the area's population "farmed pretty much exactly the way it was described in the Bible." In other words, they tended indigenous foods such as chickpeas, wheat, and olives grown from heirloom seeds. These native crops, referred to as *baladi* ("my land" in Arabic), are sometimes grown without irrigation, resulting in stronger, truer flavors. They form the bedrock of the Galilean pantry. For centuries, these subsistence farmers pressed olives into oil; ground chickpeas to make hummus; and transformed whole wheat into nutty flour, bulgur (cracked wheat, a main ingredient in tabbouleh), and *freekeh*, toasted green wheat. The prevalence of foods such as *labaneh*, a tangy, yogurt-like cheese, can be ascribed to the local Bedouin tribes, who, as herders, contributed dairy to the regional diet. Plus, the Jordan River on the eastern border, the inland Sea of Galilee, and the Mediterranean at the west have all supported centuries of fishing, still evident in the Arab-Israeli port city of Akko, where you'll find local species such as tilapia. And foraging in the wild is equally important for Druze, Arabs, and Bedouins: Countless greens such as wild asparagus and mallow serve as the bases for stews, savory pies, and other dishes, while *za'atar*, wild thyme, is dried and mixed with sumac (a powder made from tart red berries) and a variety of spices to make a type of seasoning that's consumed all over the Middle East. —G.G.



Olives



Chickpeas



Galilean tilapia



Wheat



Za'atar



Hummus mashaushe at Hummus
Said in the old city of Akko (see
page 67 for a recipe).



surprising me. As we nibble the first cooked morsels, a passionate discussion erupts in Hebrew. I'm dying to know what it's about. Farm equipment and irrigation, it turns out. I should have guessed.

A third Galili brother, an organic farmer named Moshe, passes bowls of his cherries. I think how wonderful it feels to eat this just-picked food among the men who lived together on this kibbutz and worked this soil. The open air and camaraderie are as nourishing as the meal. The mindfulness of this gathering, of the cooking and eating, embodies a reverence for the ordinary that I associate with this region.

THE FOLLOWING DAY, I arrive at Bustan Chaim ("orchard of life" in Hebrew), Lior's home on a remote plot of land near the Lebanon border, for Shavuot dinner. It's a holiday I've never celebrated before, but here, it feels right to do so. I ascend a steep incline planted with lemon, pomegranate, olive, and fig trees and approach a low-slung house covered with vines. Inside, Lior's mother, Aya, a no-nonsense woman, is frying chicken livers and onions. She was born on a nearby kibbutz to a Tunisian father and a Transylvanian mother, but explains that she grew up eating Eastern European dishes like this one made by the Polish Jews who cooked their communal meals.

While Lior goes off to gather ingredients from the orchard's trees and the plants that grow wild among them, his father shows me the grounds, which, like so much of the land here, are idyllic. "My dream was to plant the seven species here," Moshe tells me.

Farming, he says, has transformed him. "From the first plant I put in the ground, I decided I had to live here." Moshe isn't religious, but the land has led him to the Bible for unconventional reasons. For him, the text is full of agricultural insights into nurturing this very earth. Lior returns with lavender and figs for our dessert; purslane, which he'll toss with feta cheese and cured olives; wild fennel, his addition to a Tunisian turnip salad; rosemary as kindling for grilling vegetables; and grape leaves for rolling *dolma*.

As the sun sets, we gather on a deck overlooking the Galilee. The table is set. Lior's wife, his siblings and their kids are here, as are friends. Moshe Galili enters with nectarines from his orchard singing "Shalom Aleichem" in Hebrew, a Sabbath song written by kabbalists in the Middle Ages in nearby Safed, still recited by Jews all over the world: *Peace unto you, ministering angels, messengers of the Most High, of the supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.*

Aya's Shavuot table holds riches. There's the Polish chicken liver. Lior has made *chreime*, a spicy North African fish and tomato stew using St. Peter's fish, tilapia from the Sea of Galilee. There are stuffed grape leaves and grilled pita bread with *za'atar* spice, both Arab specialties. And there are dishes Lior has improvised based on what's grown nearby—fennel bulbs, scallions, and zucchini grilled over lemonwood charcoal, a salad of chickpeas with preserved lemon. The table tells the story of age-old flavors, of recent migrations, and of fresh, new beginnings. The combination, to me, is pure Galilee. ✈

GALILEE, ISRAEL

Dinner for two with drinks and tip: **Moderate** \$40–\$80

WHERE TO STAY

Efendi Hotel

Louis IX Street, Akko (972/747/299-799; efendi-hotel.com). Rates: \$350–\$650 for a double. Restaurateur Uri Jeremias has painstakingly transformed two 19th-century Ottoman-style buildings into a hotel in Akko's old city. Restored frescoes, soaring ceilings, and views of Haifa Bay are all part of the luxurious setting.

Pausa Inn

She'ar Yashuv 63, She'ar Yashuv (972/546/904-434; pausa-inn.co.il). Rates: \$200 for a double. This small guesthouse run by Avigdor and Einat Rothem is located on a gorgeous two acres with an orchard and garden in Upper Galilee. The highlight is the Israeli-style breakfast buffet, featuring fresh cheeses and an array of just-picked fruits and vegetables.

WHERE TO EAT

Al Tanur

Reina Junction, Upper Nazareth (972/046/014-948). Owned by the

family behind Nazareth's El Babour, an old spice market and mill, this casual Arab restaurant offers one of the many fine meals in the region's best dining town. Try the stuffed lamb neck over *freekeh*, roasted green wheat.

Goats with the Wind Farm

Har Hashabi, Yodfat (972/505/327-387; goatswiththewind.com). Dalia and Amnon Zaldstein run this dairy and restaurant in the hills of the Lower Galilee. The Eden-like setting features cushion seating under carob trees for a rustic, seasonal meal that includes the farm's organic goat cheese.

WHAT TO DO

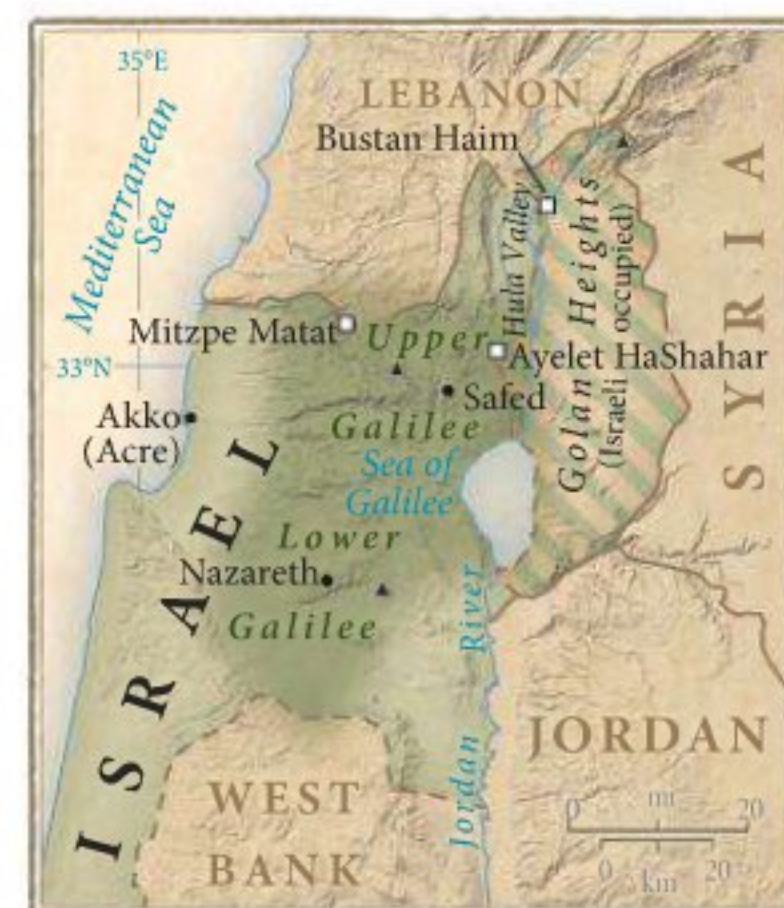
Erez Komarovsky's Galilee Cooking School

Route 899, Mitzpe Matat (972/39/772-929; erez-komarovsky.co.il). Israeli chef Erez Komarovsky teaches cooking classes out of his Upper Galilee home. His dishes—based on regional foods, including those he grows in his garden—are part of the lunch that follows. Register in advance for

Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday classes.

The Old City of Akko Market

Marco Polo Street, Akko. The old city of Akko, with its serpentine alleys and Crusade-era architecture, is home to one of Israel's best markets. Get to know local ingredients, such as *za'atar* and St. Peter's fish, and taste exemplary Galilean-style hummus from Hummus Said, and sweets from Knafeh Qashash. —G.G.



THE MAP FACTORY

Almond & Marzipan Roulade

SERVES 10–12

Chef Erez Komarovsky's buttery almond pastry (pictured on [page 61](#)), swirled through with marzipan and toasted nuts, makes a fine breakfast or afternoon snack.

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups cake flour
- 1 ¼-oz. package active dry yeast
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 egg yolks
- 1½ cups butter, softened
- 12 oz. marzipan (almond paste; see [page 84](#))
- 1 cup whole almonds, toasted and roughly chopped
- 1 tbsp. coarse sugar
- Juice and zest of 1 lemon

1 Whisk flours, yeast, and salt in a bowl; make a well in the center. Whisk buttermilk, ½ cup sugar, 3 yolks, and ¼ cup warm water in a bowl; pour into well and add butter. Stir until a stiff dough forms. On a lightly floured surface, knead dough until smooth, about 6 minutes. Transfer to a greased bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerate at least 2 hours or up to overnight.

2 Heat oven to 350°. On a floured surface, roll dough into an 11" x 16" rectangle. Distribute marzipan and almonds evenly over dough, leaving a 1" border. With a long side facing you, roll dough up and over filling; pinch and tuck ends of dough under. Transfer loaf, seam side down, to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet; brush with remaining yolk and sprinkle with coarse sugar. Bake until golden and

cooked through, about 1 hour.

3 Boil remaining sugar and ¼ cup water in a 1-qt. saucepan; cook, stirring, to make a syrup, 1–2 minutes. Stir in lemon juice and zest and brush syrup over the hot cake. Let cool slightly before serving.

Charred Eggplant with Chile Sauce & Tahini

SERVES 2–4

To make chef Erez Komarovsky's charred eggplant (pictured on [page 60](#)), choose young eggplant that haven't yet developed seeds, which can cause bitterness. If you have a gas burner at home, try cooking each eggplant over the open flame for about four minutes to impart smoky flavor.

- 2 small Italian eggplant (about 1 lb.)
- 2 cups cilantro leaves, chopped
- 1 cup mint leaves, chopped
- 1 cup virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup honey
- 6 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 serrano chile, stemmed and seeded
- Juice and zest of 1 lemon
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ½ cup tahini, for serving
- 6 soft-boiled eggs, halved

1 Heat broiler to high. Place eggplant on an aluminum foil-lined baking sheet. Broil, turning as needed, until tender and charred, 8–10 minutes.

2 Purée cilantro, mint, oil, honey, garlic, serrano chile, juice, zest, salt and pepper in a food processor to make a smooth herb sauce. To serve, slice eggplant in half lengthwise, leaving stem attached. Season

with salt and pepper. Spoon herb sauce and tahini over eggplant and arrange eggs around eggplant on a serving platter.

Cherry & Herb Salad

SERVES 4–6

This sweet-tart cherry, cilantro, and walnut salad (pictured on [page 61](#)), chef Erez Komarovsky's riff on a classic Turkish recipe, is delicious on its own, or as a relish for grilled meats or fish.

- 2 red Holland chiles
- 1 lb. fresh dark pitted cherries
- 1 cup cilantro leaves
- ½ cup walnut halves, toasted and roughly chopped
- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- 1½ tbsp. pomegranate molasses
- 1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- Kosher salt and black pepper, to taste

1 Heat oven broiler to high. Place chiles on a baking sheet; broil, turning as needed, until charred and tender, 4–5 minutes.

2 Transfer to a bowl and cover with plastic wrap; let sit 5 minutes. Discard stems, skin, and seeds from chiles; finely chop and transfer to a bowl. Add cherries, cilantro, walnuts, oil, molasses, juice, salt, and pepper; toss to combine. Serve chilled or at room temperature.

Chreime

(Spicy Tunisian Fish Stew)

SERVES 4–6

This Tunisian-Jewish Sabbath specialty (pictured on [page 61](#)) from Israeli chef Lior Lev Sercarz features tender fish braised in a thick chile-spiced tomato sauce.

- 6 fish filets (about 4 oz. each), such as sea bass or grouper
- 3 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 10 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
- 3 small red Thai chiles, stemmed and roughly chopped
- 1 6-oz. can tomato paste
- 2 cups minced cilantro

Combine fish, juice, salt, and pepper in a bowl; set aside. Heat oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add garlic and chiles; cook, stirring, until soft, 1–2 minutes. Add paste; cook,

stirring, until slightly caramelized, about 2 minutes. Add cilantro and 1¼ cups water; boil. Reduce heat to medium; cook until sauce is slightly reduced, 6 minutes. Add fish, skin side up, with its juice and cover; cook until fish is done, 18–20 minutes.

Dolma

(Grape Leaves Stuffed with Rice)

MAKES 25

This recipe for stuffed grape leaves (pictured on [page 61](#)), from chef Lior Lev Sercarz, an expert in spice blending, uses both lemon juice and zest to enhance the flavor of the stuffing.

- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 small yellow onion, minced
- ½ cup long-grain rice
- ½ tsp. minced fresh thyme
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 1 oz. dried Turkish apricots, minced
- ½ cup minced cilantro
- ⅓ cup minced parsley
- ¼ cup golden raisins
- ¼ cup pine nuts
- 2 tbsp. minced mint
- 2 tbsp. red currant jelly
- ⅛ tsp. cayenne pepper
- 1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice, plus the zest of 1 lemon
- 25 grape leaves packed in brine (see [page 84](#)), rinsed
- 1 lemon, thinly sliced

1 Heat oil in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add garlic and onions; cook, stirring, until soft, 3–5 minutes. Add rice, thyme, salt, and pepper; cook 2 minutes. Add 1 cup stock and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and cook, covered, until rice is tender, 22–24 minutes. Stir in apricots, cilantro, parsley, raisins, nuts, mint, jelly, cayenne, lemon juice and zest, salt, and pepper.

2 Heat oven to 375°. Working with one leaf at a time, stuff the grape leaves (see "How to Stuff Grape Leaves," left). Place stuffed grape leaves seam side down in a single layer in an 8" x 8" baking dish. Add remaining stock and distribute lemon slices over grape leaves. Cover pan with aluminum foil and bake until tender, about 1 hour. Let grape leaves cool before serving.

Grilled Pita Bread with Za'atar

MAKES 6 PITAS

This chewy flatbread topped with za'atar (pictured on [page 59](#)), a spice

HOW TO STUFF GRAPE LEAVES



1 Drain, rinse, and pat grape leaves dry. Lay flat, vein side up, with the stem facing you. Put 1 tbsp. rice filling in center of leaf and fold right side of leaf over filling.



2 Fold left side of leaf over filling, overlapping the other side completely. Squeeze filling on top and bottom to form a compact package.



3 Fold bottom of the leaf over the center of the package and roll it forward into a cylinder, tightening as you go to ensure a snug parcel.

blend of wild thyme, tangy sumac, and toasted sesame seeds, can be grilled outdoors or oven-baked and finished in a grill pan.

- 1 ¼-oz. package active dry yeast
- 1 tbsp. sugar
- 1 tbsp. kosher salt, plus more
- 4 cups bread flour, plus more for kneading
- ⅓ cup olive oil, plus more for greasing and grilling
- ½ cup za'atar seasoning (see page 84)
- Juice and zest of 1 lemon

1 Combine yeast, sugar, and ½ cup water heated to 115° in a bowl. Let sit until foamy, about 10 minutes. Combine 1 tbsp. salt and 1 cup warm water in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook; mix until salt is dissolved. With the motor running, slowly add flour in 3 batches and yeast mixture in 2 batches. Add 2 tbsp. oil; mix until a soft, sticky dough forms. On a floured surface, knead dough until smooth, 5–10 minutes. Shape dough into a ball and place in a lightly greased bowl. Cover loosely with plastic wrap and let sit in a warm place until doubled in size, about 1 hour.

2 Heat oven to 350°. Punch dough down; knead for 5 minutes. Divide into 6 pieces and roll each piece into a ball; place on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet and cover loosely with plastic wrap. Let sit in a warm place until doubled in size, 20–25 minutes.

3 Working with 1 piece of dough at a time, dust dough heavily with flour and roll into a 7" circle, about ⅛" thick. Transfer to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Bake, flipping once, until puffed, 3–5 minutes. Transfer pita to a plate and cover with a kitchen towel to keep warm.

4 Mix remaining oil, za'atar, juice, zest, and salt in a bowl. Heat a cast-iron grill pan over medium-high heat. Working with one pita at a time, cook, flipping once, until puffed and charred in spots, 2–3 minutes. Transfer to a serving platter and brush generously with za'atar mixture.

★ Hummus Mashaushe (Galilean-Style Hummus)

MAKES 3 CUPS

Generous spice, a good dose of olive oil, and chickpeas piled high are the

hallmarks of this Galilean-style hummus (pictured on page 64).

- 1½ cups dried chickpeas, soaked overnight; drained
- ½ cup tahini
- ¾ cup olive oil, plus more
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice
- 2 tsp. ground cumin
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 small red Thai chile, stemmed and seeded
- Kosher salt, to taste

Bring chickpeas and 4 cups water to a boil in a 4-qt. saucepan. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook, covered, until chickpeas are very tender, 1–1½ hours. Drain, reserving ½ cup cooking liquid; cool to room temperature. Transfer all but ¾ cup chickpeas to a food processor with the tahini, oil, juice, cumin, garlic, chile, and salt; purée until smooth. Add reserved cooking liquid and continue to purée until airy in consistency, about 5 minutes. Transfer hummus to a serving dish. Top with remaining whole chickpeas, drizzle with more oil, and sprinkle with salt.

★ Israeli Chopped Salad SERVES 8–10

Janna Gur, author of *The Book of New Israeli Food* (Schocken, 2008), uses sumac and cinnamon to heighten the flavors of this Israeli staple (pictured on page 60).

- ¼ cup minced cilantro
- ¼ cup minced mint
- ¼ cup minced parsley
- 2 tsp. ground sumac (see page 84)
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- ½ cup olive oil
- 6 scallions, thinly sliced
- 4 cloves garlic
- 4 medium ripe tomatoes, cored, seeded, and minced
- 3 medium cucumbers, seeded and minced
- 2 serrano chiles, stemmed, seeded, and minced
- 1 red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and minced
- 1 large white onion, minced
- Juice and zest of 3 lemons
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Mix all the ingredients in a bowl. Let sit 20 minutes before serving.

★ Knafeh (Syrup-Soaked Cheese Pastry) SERVES 10–20

In this recipe (pictured on page

60), *kataif*, a bird's nest-like phyllo dough, is layered with fresh cheese and doused in amber-hued syrup.

- 1 cup sugar
- 2 tsp. lemon juice
- 1 tsp. red food coloring, optional
- ½ cup whole milk
- 3 tbsp. semolina
- 1 lb. whole-milk ricotta
- 1 lb. kataif (shredded phyllo dough, see page 84), crumbled
- 2 cups unsalted butter, melted, plus more for greasing
- ¼ cup minced pistachios

1 Boil sugar and ½ cup water in a 2-qt. saucepan; cook, stirring until sugar is dissolved, 1–2 minutes. Stir in juice and food coloring; set syrup aside. Boil milk and semolina in a 1-qt. saucepan; cook, whisking, until slightly thickened, 1–2 minutes. Whisk in ricotta; set mixture aside.

2 Heat oven to 350°. Lightly grease a 9" x 13" baking dish. Toss kataif and butter in a bowl until butter is absorbed; press half into the bottom of the dish. Spread ricotta mixture evenly over kataif; top with remaining kataif. Press layers firmly together. Bake until crisp and golden, 1–1½ hours. Let cool to room temperature. Transfer cake to a serving platter. Spoon syrup over the top and sprinkle with pistachios.

Labaneh SERVES 4

Thick, tart, and creamy, this yogurt-like cheese (pictured on page 60), when eaten together with olive oil, pita bread, and za'atar spice, makes a typical Galilean breakfast.

- 8 cups whole milk
- 1 cup plain yogurt
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Olive oil, for serving

1 Bring milk to a boil in a 4-qt. nonreactive saucepan fitted with a deep-fry thermometer. Remove from heat and let cool until thermometer reads 118°. Transfer 1 cup milk to a bowl; whisk in yogurt until combined. Add yogurt mixture to saucepan and whisk until smooth; cover tightly with plastic wrap and let sit in a warm place (ideally 70°–75°) until thickened, 6–8 hours.

2 Line a fine-mesh strainer with 3

layers of cheesecloth; set over a bowl. Transfer yogurt to strainer; let drain at least 8 hours or overnight. Transfer to a serving dish. Season with salt and drizzle with oil.

Poike (Galilean Beef Stew)

SERVES 6–8

Any seasonal vegetable, from earthy turnips to pungent kohlrabi, can be added to this hearty beef stew (pictured on page 61).

- ⅓ cup olive oil
- 2 lb. beef chuck, trimmed and cut into 1½" pieces
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 6 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 medium carrots, sliced
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 1 medium parsnip, peeled and cut into ½" pieces
- 1 cup dry red wine
- ½ cup beef stock
- 3 oz. dried apricots, quartered
- 3 oz. pitted prunes, halved
- ⅓ cup raisins
- ½ cup minced parsley
- ⅓ cup minced cilantro
- ¼ cup minced oregano
- ½ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- ¼ tsp. cayenne pepper
- ¼ tsp. ground ginger
- 6 fresh sage leaves
- 2 medium oranges, quartered
- 2 medium Yukon gold potatoes, cut into ½" wedges
- 1 medium turnip, peeled and cut into ½" wedges
- 1 small kohlrabi, peeled and cut into ½" wedges
- 1 small zucchini, cut crosswise ½" thick

Heat oil in a 6-qt. Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Season beef with salt and pepper. Cook beef until browned, 5–7 minutes. Transfer to a bowl. Add garlic, carrots, celery, onions, and parsnips to pan; cook until soft, 5–7 minutes. Add wine; cook until reduced by half, 4–6 minutes. Return beef to pot, along with stock, apricots, prunes, raisins, parsley, cilantro, oregano, nutmeg, cayenne, ginger, sage, and oranges; boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and cover; cook until beef is just tender, 1½–2 hours. Add potatoes, turnips, kohlrabi, zucchini, salt, and pepper; continue to cook until vegetables are tender, 1–1½ hours more.



A HUNGER

FOR SINDHI PEOPLE LIVING IN INDIA, COOKING

BY KAUMUDI MARATHÉ PHOTO

A Sindhi vendor sells *sana pakora* (chile fritters) and *batata vada* (potato croquettes) in the town of Adipur, India.



FOR HOME

PROVIDES A VITAL CONNECTION TO THEIR ROOTS

GRAPHS BY ARIANA LINDQUIST

Growing up, I moved all over the world with my parents, professors who went wherever the jobs were. Before settling in Los Angeles at 26, I never lived in one town for more than a few years, and I felt rootless. Food became a way for me to connect the dots between the places I had been and the ones I was going to. I'd known no one else who felt similarly—until I met the family of my husband, Sanjiv Bajaj. 🍷 The Bajajs are Sindhi, a people from the Sindh in the Indus Valley, a northwest corner of the Indian subcontinent that became part of the newly formed Pakistan after independence from the British in 1947. While many Sindhi Muslims remained in the Sindh afterward, most Sindhi Hindus headed into India, never to return. Sanjiv's grandparents

ended up in Mumbai, 900 miles from where they were born.

In some ways, Sanjiv's family was like the one I grew up in; they, too, were uprooted. But the difference was that this family carried their home with them, in their hearts and in their cooking. Whereas my mother made beef Stroganoff and the food of Maharashtra, the state in India where I was born, with equal flair, Sanjiv's mother and grandmother cooked only ancestral foods. Chickpea cakes in a rich tomato sauce; *kadhi*, a lentil stew; cardamom-spiced desserts—these were dishes that embodied their identity. Though prepared in a kitchen in Mumbai, the Bajaj family meal always pointed northward, toward the Sindh.

I had my first taste of Sindhi food at my in-laws' house in 1990. Sanjiv's mother, Madhu, made *kadhi*, a tart, peppery stew bolstered with okra and green beans. When we sat down to eat, the family showed me how to drench the rice in my bowl with just the right amount of soupy lentils. While Sanjiv, who was born in Mumbai and had never seen the Sindh, devoured his *kadhi* with gusto but without nostalgia, each spoonful seemed to trans-

port his 74-year-old grandmother, Savitri, back to Shikarpur, the sleepy district capital on the Sindh's northern border.

At this first meal and many more to follow, Savitri took me with her on flights of reminiscence, vividly recalling lush, green rice fields, swaying date palms, fish swimming up the nearby Indus River from the Arabian Sea. A tiny woman with a keen mind, Savitri had married at 14 and cooked for her family ever since. I spent many afternoons listening, fascinated, as she described the foods of her younger years. The Sindh's arid climate was ideal for drying foods to preserve them, she told me, and so the cuisine used ingredients such as dried morels, crispy lentil crackers known as *papad*, and sun-dried vegetables, such as squash and lotus root, deep-fried and heavily seasoned to add a crunchy, spicy element to meals. Beyond that, the Sindh's location on the Silk Road meant that over the years it was influenced by Iranian, Arab, and central Asian cooking. Muslim rulers had controlled the Sindh for centuries; their influence remains in the prominence that meat has in Sindhi cuisine. And given the Sindh's past as part of the Mughal Empire, the luxuriant staples of Persian cooking—saffron, rose water, dates, almonds, and pistachios—are prized for

both sweets and savory rice dishes.

My education wasn't confined to stories. Whenever I prodded Savitri for more information about a dish, she'd ask, "Shall we make it?" And a cooking lesson would commence. One of the first recipes I learned from her was for *dharan ji kadhi*. The golden bracelets on her arm jangled as she gently kneaded chickpea flour with cilantro, chiles, yogurt, and oil to make thick dumplings that she fried and then immersed in a delectable sauce of tomato, onion, and cilantro. For an appetizer, we made *tuk*, twice-fried potatoes that she cooked until just soft, then smashed with her palm. Right before we ate, she fried them once more. The chunks of potato, brightened with red chile and dried mango powders, were crisp and golden outside, steaming and tender within.

Over the next 20 years of visits and cooking, Sindhi flavors began to feel like my own. After Savitri passed away in 1997, Madhu took up where her mother left off. Then Sanjiv and I had our daughter, Keya. Although married life proved (continued on [page 75](#))

KAUMUDI MARATHÉ is a Los Angeles-based writer. This is her first story for SAVEUR.

From top: A Sindhi family in Dhordo, a village near the India-Pakistan border; *dharan ji kadhi*, chickpea-flour dumplings in spiced tomato sauce (see [page 76](#) for a recipe).





TODD COLEMAN (TOP LEFT AND RIGHT)



Facing page, clockwise from top left: *seyal murgh*, Sindhi chicken and onions; *tuk*, Sindhi twice-fried potatoes; Pushpa Bhojwani, a Sindhi home cook in Adipur, India. This page: *pohp batalu jo pulao*, spiced rice with dates and fried potatoes (see page 76 for recipes).



TODD COLEMAN (BOTTOM LEFT AND RIGHT)

(continued from page 70) more complicated than either of us had expected, I still felt the same obligation that the Bajaj women had felt toward me to pass on the family's traditions to my child, so I cooked what Sindhi dishes I knew at our home in Los Angeles and became even more deliberate in my quest to better understand the cuisine. Madhu urged me to visit the twin towns of Adipur and Gandhidham in Gujarat, in northwestern India near the Pakistan border, where some Sindhis had settled after Partition. "Sindhis there have kept up traditions in ways we have not," she told me. "I'm sure their food is closer to its roots."

On my next visit to India, I followed her advice. I created lists of recipes to look into. I booked tickets. Then, two weeks before my trip, Sanjiv and I decided to separate, and in spite of all my preparations, I suddenly felt adrift. Planes to Gujarat flew from Mumbai, so I had made plans to visit Madhu before flying north. It was too late to change my itinerary; I headed to Mumbai anyway, wondering what this visit would be like now that my relationship with her son was changing.

I needn't have worried. Madhu greeted me as she always had, laying out a lunch of *sai bhaaji*, sautéed mashed greens that included fenugreek leaves. Sindhis love these fresh greens, which have a pleasing, intense bitterness that the dried leaves don't. I'd grown to love them, too. I mixed fluffy white basmati rice into the dish, along with a dollop of thick homemade yogurt. My mind was still in turmoil, but my senses told me to relax: I was home.

Over the next few days, we cooked all of the Sindhi dishes I'd come to love. Not once did Madhu raise the subject of the separation, but she let me know, through the zeal with which she tackled each dish with me, that we were still family. The last recipe we cooked together was Sanjiv's favorite dessert, *malpura*, delicate curd cheese pancakes soaked in cardamom-scented syrup. Creamy and thin, with syrup clinging to their lacy edges, they melted in my mouth. Although *malpura* are prepared in other parts of north India, Madhu's recipe yielded pancakes that were soft clouds on the tongue. When my visit came to an end, I was unsure of how to say good-bye, not knowing when I might return.

Adipur and Gandhidham are 500 miles north of Mumbai. The plane touched down

Clockwise from top left: Outside of Mumbai a Sindhi vendor sells spiced lotus root and taro snacks; *malpura*, curd cheese pancakes with cardamom syrup; *sai bhaaji*, Sindhi mixed greens (see page 76 for recipes).

on land that was flat and dotted with thorny acacia trees. Through a friend, I had arranged to visit Kamla Sabhani, a Sindhi home cook whose family had settled here after Partition. Sabhani, a housewife in her 60s, met me at the door of her home with hugs before offering a traditional welcome of lentil crackers and water. She waved me into her kitchen where she was making *pohp batalu jo pulao*, a sumptuous dish of rice cooked in a tangy tomato and onion sauce, and *seyal murgh*, chicken simmered with onions in a creamy sauce, for our lunch. She started by grinding green chiles, garlic, and ginger in a mortar and pestle. This, she explained, was *sonta*, a seasoning base from the southern part of the Sindh upon which countless cooked vegetable and fish dishes are built. Sabhani used some of the *sonta* to make the *pulao*, sautéing the paste before stirring in onions and tomatoes to make a sauce. To this she added rice and peas. At the very last, she blanketed the cooked rice with layers of chopped cilantro, sliced dates, caramelized onions, and fried potatoes. The rest of the *sonta* became a spicy base for the chicken.

We tucked in, washing everything down with glasses of lightly salted buttermilk. The chicken, served with homemade sweet cilantro

chutney, was tender and fragrant. The *pulao*, with its ornate garnish, was luxurious, with a wonderful interplay of flavors and textures that changed with every bite. While you can find *pulaos* all over India, they likely originated with the former Persian rulers of the Sindh, and the dried fruit—which I'd never seen in the dish in Mumbai—spoke to the Sindh's proximity to Iran and central Asia. It was an extravagant dish, and a gracious offering for a visitor. As I ate, I reflected that while Shikarpur, the home of Savitri's memories and the well-spring of the dishes that defined Sanjiv's family, was still many miles away, this meal was as close as I was going to get, at least for now. It felt close enough.

My flight took off just past midnight, carrying me back to LA and an uncertain future. I dozed off, and when I awoke, a glance at the flight path channel indicated we were flying over Pakistan. I looked out the window. Below me in a magical starburst pattern of lights was Karachi, the capital of the Sindh, my first view of the paternal homeland my daughter might never see. She doesn't really need to, I realized then: As long as she knows the region's dishes, she will carry the Sindh with her wherever she goes. ✈

MUMBAI AND ADIPUR-GANDHIDHAM, INDIA

Dinner for two with drinks and tip: Inexpensive Under \$10 Moderate \$10–\$60

WHERE TO STAY ITC Grand Central

287, Doctor Babasaheb Ambedkar Road, Parel, Mumbai (91/22/2410-1010; it-hotels.in). \$300 for a double. At this luxury hotel in the heart of Mumbai, amenities include butler service, a spa, and five excellent restaurants, among them Kebabs & Kurries, featuring regional dishes from all over the country, and Hornby's Pavilion, a 24-hour coffee shop that serves a knockout south Indian breakfast.

Hotel Shiv

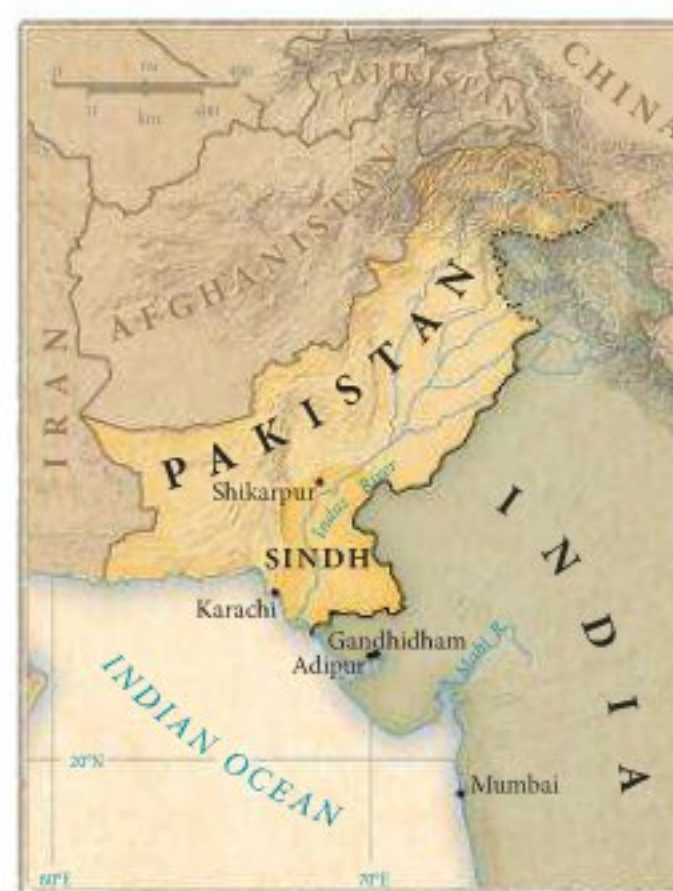
Grand Plot No. 32, Sector 8, Near B.M. Petrol Pump, Gandhidham (91/2836/238-911; shivhotels.com). Rooms start at \$65. This business hotel offers comfortable Internet-equipped, air-conditioned rooms. The hotel's Mughlai restaurant, Celebrity, serves north Indian dishes such as kebabs, *naan*, and chicken tikka masala.

WHERE TO EAT

Kailash Parbat

5 Sheela Mahal, First Pasta Lane,

Colaba, Mumbai (91/22/2287-4823; kailashparbatandheri.com). Moderate. This Sindhi restaurant, established in 1952, has expanded its menu over the decades (offerings range from Chinese to Punjabi), but it remains the best in town for Sin-



dhi specialties like *bhee tikki* (lotus stem fritters) and *tuk* (twice-fried potatoes).

Sindhu Pure Ghee Sweets & Snacks

3 Satguru Shopping Centre, Mumbai (91/22/2600-6664). Inexpensive.

Originally opened in Shikarpur, Sindh, in 1902, this transplanted shop sells traditional treats such as *tosha*, fried dough rolls dipped in sugar, and *lola*, sweet bread cooked on a griddle.

Maitri Road

Adipur. Inexpensive. Adipur's main thoroughfare is packed with stands selling Sindhi food. Look for Jumdomal Nasta House, which serves *chana dabulroti*, spiced chickpeas with fried bread, and Kapta Nasta House, selling snacks such as *sana pakora* (chile fritters) and *batata vada*, potato croquettes filled with minced onions, chiles, and dried mango powder.

WHAT TO DO

Indian Institute of Sindhology

Ward-A, Post Box No. 10, Adipur (91/2836/263-851; sindhology.org). This small museum exhibits artifacts like painted wood mortars, old grinding stones, and other kitchen implements, as well as more than 1,000 photographs documenting Sindhi culture. —K.M.

Dharan Ji Kadhi

(Chickpea-flour Dumplings in Spiced Tomato Sauce)

SERVES 4–6

This rich dish (pictured on [page 71](#)) features chickpea-flour dumplings, a Sindhi specialty. For hard-to-find ingredients, see [page 84](#).

Kosher salt, to taste

- 1 cup chickpea flour
 - ½ cup finely chopped cilantro
 - ⅓ cup canola oil, plus more for frying
 - ¼ cup plain yogurt
 - 2 serrano chiles, stemmed, seeded, and minced
 - 1 large white onion, minced
 - 2 tsp. coriander seeds
 - 1 tsp. black mustard seeds
 - 1 tsp. cumin seeds
 - 8 curry leaves
 - 3 dried chiles de árbol
 - 1 15-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes, crushed
 - ½ tsp. ground turmeric
 - 1 2" piece ginger, peeled and grated
 - ¼ cup finely chopped cilantro
- Cooked basmati rice

1 Boil a 6-qt. saucepan of salted water. Mix flour, cilantro, ¼ cup oil, yogurt, half each of the serranos and onions, plus salt in a bowl to make a dough. Divide and roll dough into four 4"-long logs. Add to water; simmer, covered, until firm, 4–6 minutes. Transfer to paper towels. Wipe pan dry; add enough oil to reach a depth of 2". Heat until a deep-fry thermometer inserted in the oil reads 350°. Slice rolls into 1½" dumplings; fry until crisp, 2–4 minutes; drain.

2 Heat remaining oil in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add coriander, mustard and cumin seeds, curry leaves, and dried chiles; cook until seeds pop, 1–2 minutes. Add remaining serranos and onions, plus tomatoes, turmeric, and ginger; cook until caramelized, 5–7 minutes. Add 1½ cups water; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium; cook until thick, 6–8 minutes. Add dumplings and salt; heat. Garnish with cilantro. Serve with rice.

Malpura

(Ricotta Pancakes in Cardamom Syrup)

MAKES ABOUT 13 PANCAKES

These creamy pancakes soaked in cardamom syrup and sprinkled with pistachios (pictured on [page 74](#)) make an ethereal dessert.

- 1 cup sugar
- ¼ tsp. saffron
- 3 whole green cardamom pods, cracked

- 1 cup ricotta cheese, drained in a sieve overnight
- 1 cup flour, sifted
- ¼ cup ghee or clarified butter
- ¼ cup chopped pistachios

Simmer sugar, saffron, cardamom, and 1 cup water in a 1-qt. saucepan over medium heat for 12 minutes. Mix ricotta, flour, and ¾ cup water in a bowl to make a batter. Heat ghee in a 12" nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Working in batches, spoon 2-tbsp. portions of batter into skillet, and fry until golden, 2–3 minutes. Arrange pancakes in a shallow dish with sides; pour cardamom syrup over top, sprinkle with pistachios, and let soak for 5 minutes before serving.

Pohp Batalu Jo Pulao

(Spiced Rice with Dates & Fried Potatoes)

SERVES 6–8

The recipe for this festive rice dish garnished with dates, potatoes, and onions (pictured on [page 73](#)) is from Sindhi cook Kamla Sabhani.

- 6 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 serrano chile, stemmed
- 1 2" piece ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1¼ cups canola oil
- 2 large white onions (1 minced, 1 thinly sliced)
- 4 black peppercorns
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 cloves
- 1 whole black cardamom pod
- 1 stick cinnamon
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 4 plum tomatoes, minced
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- ¼ tsp. ground turmeric
- ¾ cup basmati rice, rinsed
- ½ cup frozen green peas
- 1 medium russet potato, cut into ½" matchsticks
- 10 seedless dates, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup finely chopped cilantro

1 Purée garlic, chile, ginger, and 3 tbsp. water until smooth; set aside. Heat 3 tbsp. oil in a 6-qt. pan over medium-high heat. Add minced onions; cook, until golden, 7–9 minutes. Add garlic purée; cook 2–3 minutes. Add peppercorns, bay leaves, cloves, cardamom, cinnamon, and salt; cook 1 minute. Add half the tomatoes, plus coriander and turmeric; cook 2–3 minutes. Add rice, peas, and 1½ cups water; boil. Reduce heat to low; cook, covered, until rice is tender, 10–12 minutes.

2 Bring sliced onions and oil to a simmer in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium heat; cook, stirring occasionally, until golden and crisp,

25–30 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer onions to paper towels; season with salt. Add potatoes to oil; fry, until golden, 15–20 minutes. Garnish rice with remaining tomatoes, plus fried onions and potatoes. Sprinkle with dates and cilantro.

Sai Bhaaji

(Sindhi Mixed Greens)

SERVES 6–8

Fenugreek greens, a Sindhi favorite, are the centerpiece of this hearty stew (pictured on [page 74](#)).

- 6 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 serrano chile, stemmed
- 1 2" piece ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- 10 oz. fresh or frozen fenugreek greens, defrosted, and finely chopped (see [page 84](#))
- 9 oz. spinach, finely chopped
- ¼ cup chana dal (see [page 84](#))
- ¼ cup canola oil
- 1 tsp. cumin seeds
- 3 dried chiles de árbol
- 1 large white onion, minced
- 1 medium carrot, minced
- 2 plum tomatoes, grated
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- 1 tsp. ground turmeric
- 4 oz. green beans, cut into ½" pieces
- 1 medium Yukon gold potato, peeled and cut into 1" pieces
- Kosher salt, to taste
- ⅓ cup finely chopped cilantro

1 Purée garlic, serrano, ginger, and 3 tbsp. water until smooth; set aside. Boil fenugreek greens, spinach, dal, and 2½ cups water in a 4-qt. saucepan. Reduce heat to medium and cover; cook until very tender, about 1 hour. Transfer to a bowl; set aside.

2 Wipe out pan, add oil and return to medium-high heat. Add cumin seeds and dried chiles; cook until seeds pop. Add garlic purée; cook 2–3 minutes. Add onions and carrots; cook until golden, 8–10 minutes. Add tomatoes; cook until caramelized, 4–6 minutes. Add reserved greens, plus coriander, turmeric, green beans, potatoes, salt, and 1 cup water; boil. Reduce heat to medium and cover; cook until potatoes are tender, 35–40 minutes. Uncover and lightly mash. Stir in cilantro.

Seyal Murgh

(Sindhi Chicken and Onions)

SERVES 4

Skinless chicken drumsticks are traditionally used in this creamy stewed dish (pictured on [page 72](#)), but cubed boneless thighs also work well.

- 6 cloves garlic, peeled

- 1 serrano chile, stemmed
- 1 2" piece ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- ¼ cup ghee or clarified butter
- 2 lb. skinless chicken drumsticks
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 large white onion, minced
- 1 tbsp. dried fenugreek leaves (see [page 84](#))
- 2 tsp. ground coriander
- 1 tsp. garam masala
- ½ tsp. ground turmeric
- 3 plum tomatoes, grated
- ¾ cup milk
- ½ cup heavy cream
- ⅓ cup finely chopped cilantro

Purée garlic, chile, ginger, and 3 tbsp. water until smooth. Heat ghee in a 6-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add chicken and season with salt and pepper; cook, flipping once, until browned, 5–7 minutes; transfer to a plate. Add garlic purée; cook, until golden, 2–3 minutes. Add onions; cook, until golden, 5–7 minutes. Add fenugreek leaves, coriander, garam masala, and turmeric; cook 1 minute. Add tomatoes; cook until slightly caramelized, 4–6 minutes. Add chicken, milk, and cream; boil. Reduce heat to medium and cover; cook until chicken is tender, 15–20 minutes. Transfer chicken to a serving platter. Cook sauce, until slightly reduced, 5–7 minutes. Stir in cilantro; pour sauce over chicken.

Tuk

(Sindhi Twice-fried Potatoes)

SERVES 4–6

These crispy potato appetizers (pictured on [page 72](#)) get a wonderfully tart flavor from *amchur*, or dried mango powder. For hard-to-find ingredients, see [page 84](#).

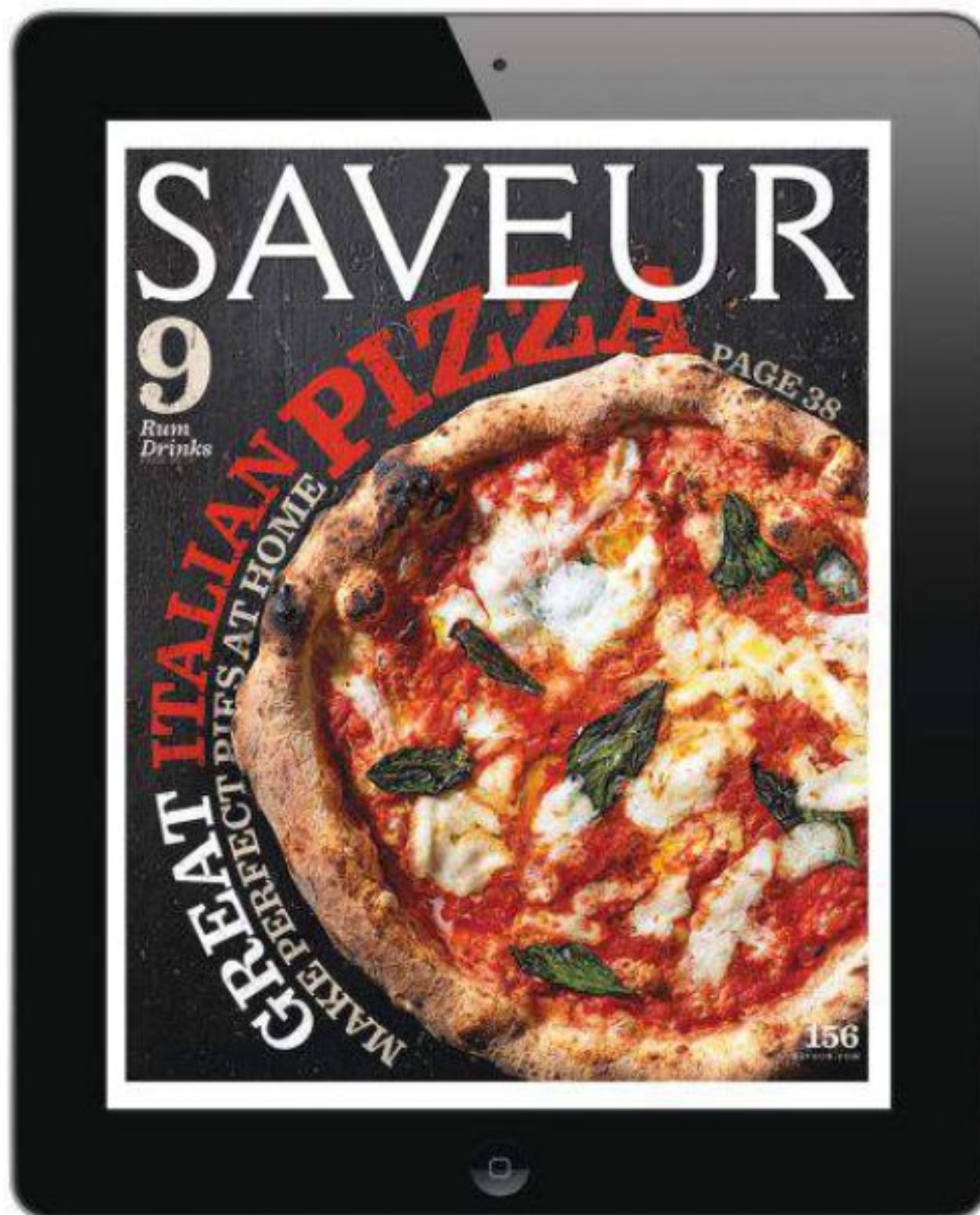
- 2 lb. baby russet potatoes (about 32), peeled
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Canola oil, for frying
- 1½ tsp. white poppy seeds
- 1 tsp. amchur
- 1 tsp. dried fenugreek leaves
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- 1 tsp. ground turmeric
- 1 tsp. red chile powder

Boil potatoes in a 4-qt. pan of salted water until tender, 18–20 minutes. Drain. Pour oil into a 6-qt. saucepan to a depth of 2". Heat until a thermometer reads 350°. Fry potatoes until golden, 4–6 minutes. Remove potatoes; smash each. Heat oil to 375°. Mix poppy, amchur, fenugreek, coriander, turmeric, chile, and salt in a bowl. Fry potatoes until crisp, 2–4 minutes; drain and toss in spices.

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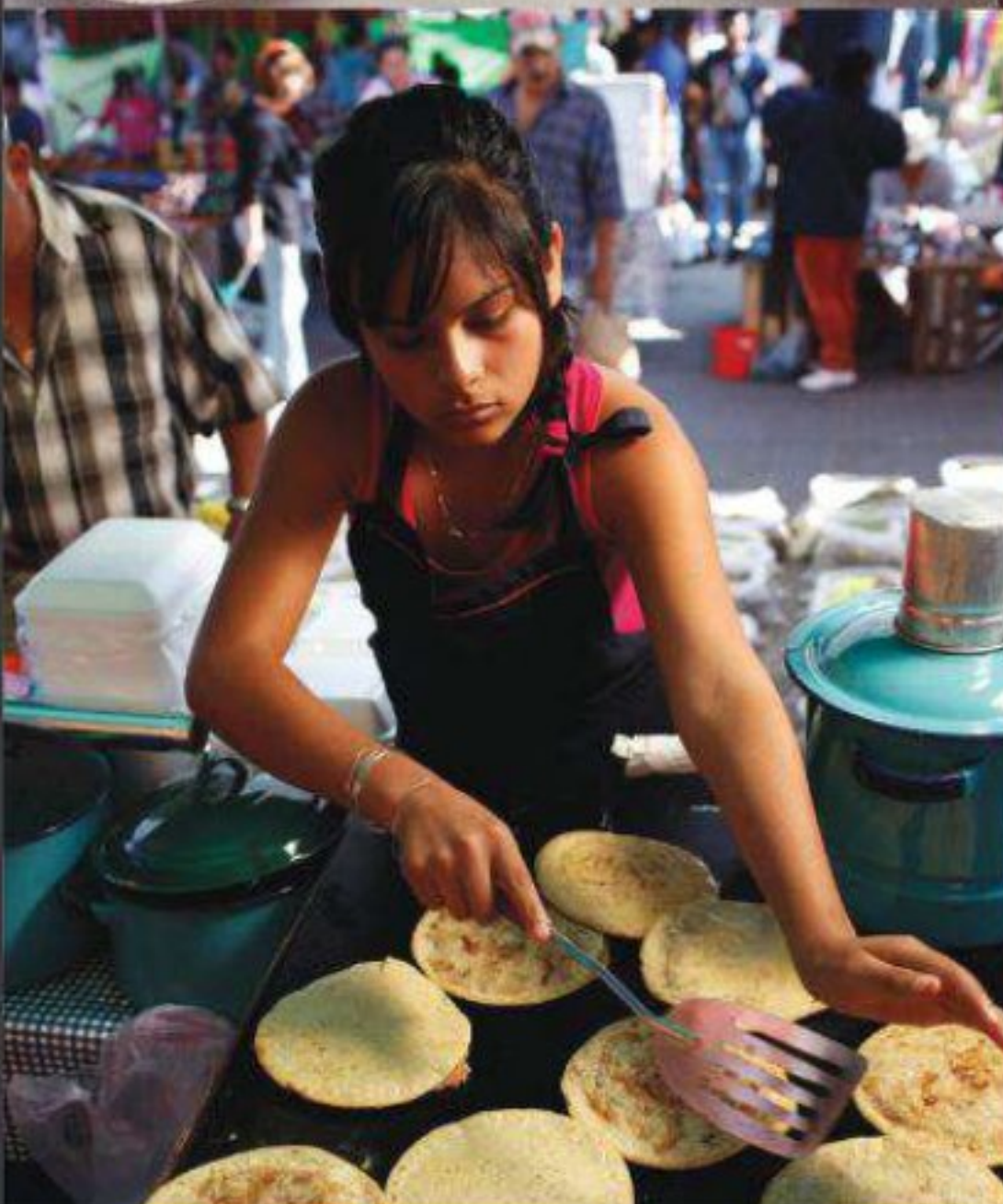
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PIZZA**

To make Naples-style pizza (see "The Gold of Naples," [page 38](#)) in your home kitchen, start with a pizza stone for even heat distribution. We love the easy-to-use **Ceramic Chef's Grilling & Cooking Stone** ①, which turns out evenly crisped crusts, and the **Modernist Cuisine baking sheet** by Baking Steel ②, a hefty metal slab that retains heat exceptionally well, reducing cooking time dramatically. **KettlePizza Outdoor Pizza Oven Kit** ③ sits between a kettle grill and its lid, converting the grill into a domed wood-fire oven. High heat is key when making Neapolitan pies, and **CDN's Digital Infrared Laser Thermometer** ④ tracks temperatures up to 1,022 degrees. For transferring pies to and from your stone, you'll need a pizza peel. The pros we know prefer perforated ones like **Allied's Aluminum Perforated Pizza Peel** ⑤, whose holes prevent pizza from sticking to its surface, but we also like the newfangled **Exo Super Peel** ⑥, whose cloth cover acts like a conveyor belt for pizza, helping pies slide easily on and off the board. Once pizza's out of the oven, you'll want to slice and serve it immediately. Unlike smaller models, the wider-than-average blade of **Oxo's Good Grips 4-inch Pizza Wheel** ⑦ doesn't get bogged down in toppings, while the streamlined horseshoe design of **Rösle's Pizza Wheel** ⑧ distributes pressure equally, making quick work of cutting the pie when it's ready to eat. —Judy Haubert

The Right Stuff

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equipment for
mastering
Neapolitan-style
pizza at home



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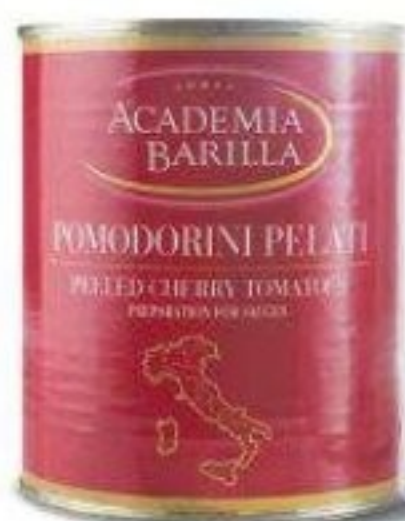
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Top Tomatoes

When sourcing canned tomatoes for our Naples-style pizza sauce (see [page 52](#) for recipe), we tried every variety we could lay our hands on, from simple American Romas to imported tomatoes with D.O.P. status, the Italian protected designation of origin. As we tested each product, raw and cooked, we looked for vibrancy of color, consistency of texture, and overall purity of flavor. In the end, we found that these dozen brands do the best job. (See [page 84](#) for sources.) —Farideh Sadeghin



Academia Barilla Pomodori Pelati Peeled cherry tomatoes with a citric tang make a versatile sauce.



Cento San Marzano Peeled Tomatoes Plump, robust tomatoes yield an earthy sauce that pairs well with mushrooms.



La Fede D.O.P. San Marzano with Basil Silky, D.O.P.-certified tomatoes make a perfectly balanced sauce.



Bella Terra Organic Italian Whole Peeled Tomatoes Firm-fleshed fruits in a tomato-basil purée turn sweet when cooked.



Rao's Homemade Italian Peeled Tomatoes Velvety tomatoes develop a pronounced tartness under the broiler.



Via Roma Whole Peeled San Marzano Tomatoes Italian D.O.P. tomatoes have a pure flavor with a trace of basil.



Muir Glen Organic Whole Peeled Plum Tomatoes These go from field to can in eight hours, retaining a ripe flavor.



Famoso San Marzano Tomatoes P.D.O. Faintly herbaceous San Marzanos packed with basil are perfect for *pizza margherita*.



San Marzano Whole Peeled Tomatoes Lightly salted U.S.-grown beauties have a bright flavor—no seasoning needed.



Ciao Pomodori Pelati Italiani Vibrantly red, with an assertive flavor that's a match for smoked mozzarella and cured meats.



365 Everyday Value Whole Peeled Tomatoes Whole Foods' store brand has a deep sweetness, perfect for marinara sauce.



La Valle Pomodoro San Marzano D.O.P. A bold punch of basil and lip-smacking acidity; good for raw or cooked sauces.

Mighty Mozzarellas

We worked our way through pounds and pounds of mozzarella for this issue, including authentic *mozzarella di bufala* from Italy; the milky, creamy *fior di latte* praised by *pizzaioli* in Naples; and cows' milk mozzarellas made in the U.S. Some were sturdy and smoky; others ethereal globes in saltwater brine. All brought wonderful textures and flavors to our pizzas (recipes begin on page 52). Here are 12 of our favorites. (See page 84 for sources.) —Judy Haubert



Galbani Mozzarella Fresca Supremely oozy, smooth, and elastic when melted, this salty cheese is perfect for calzones.



Via Roma Fresh Mozzarella Heavy cream makes this cows' milk mozzarella a decadent pizza topping.



Polly-O Whole Milk Mozzarella A semifirm aged mozzarella, perfect for shredding. Melts with a chewy snap.



Lioni Latticini Fresh Mozzarella This cows' milk cheese has a briny tang that shines atop *pizza margherita*.



Caseificio Andriese Fiordilatte Textbook cows' milk mozzarella from Italy has a mild flavor and even melt.



Ovoli Buffalo Mozzarella Cheese A luscious foundation for rich toppings like pistachio pesto and mortadella.



Lioni Latticini Natural Smoked Mozzarella Subtle and smoky, it's perfect in *frittatine*, creamy pasta fritters.



Whole Foods Market Fresh Mozzarella Ball Drier than most, this dependable cheese melts into even, gooey strands.



Calabro Whole Milk Mozzarella Semifirm aged mozzarella that shreds easily and boasts an elastic stretch.



BelGioioso Fresh Mozzarella Fresh and mild with a clean, grassy flavor; a versatile topping for all kinds of pizzas.



Antichi Sapori Mozzarella di Bufala Campana This Italian import has a custardy body and melts like a dream atop a pie.



Agricola Casearia Lupara SRL Smoked Buffalo Mozzarella A meaty, smoky cheese; great on the Montanara Starita pizza.

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③ Stop when the center of the dough is stretched to about an eighth-inch thick and the diameter is about a foot across.

① Using both hands, pick up the dough by the crust as if holding the top of a steering wheel; rotate the dough, passing it from one hand to the next, as though you were turning the wheel.

② Taking care not to compress the dough, continue to pass it from one hand to the next; gravity will help it fall and stretch naturally.

SHAPING THE DOUGH

A perfect Neapolitan crust (see [page 52](#)) requires a very gentle approach. First, dust the dough in fine semolina so it doesn't stick to your fingers or the work surface. Then, using your fingertips, press the dough outward from the center, working in a clockwise motion, spiraling gradually outward until you get within one to two inches of the edge; this edge will become the crust (Italians call it the *cornicione*). To stretch the dough while ensuring the crust remains airy and crisp, follow the steps above. —Kellie Evans

Pizza-Perfect Heat

The biggest difference between making pizza in a pizza shop and making one at home is the oven. The woodburning types you'll find at most Neapolitan pizzerias burn steadily at temperatures from 750 to 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit—temperatures at which the pizza cooks in 60 to 90 seconds, resulting in crusts that crackle but stay pliant, mozzarella that remains milky, toppings that stay fresh, and tomato sauce that retains its raw brightness. Below are two methods we devised to reliably hit these volcanic temperatures at home. —Kellie Evans

1 The Broiler Since most home ovens won't go higher than 500 degrees, we concentrated on the broiler, where the heat is most intense. We placed a pizza stone on a shelf three inches from the broiler, set the dial to high, and waited. After 30 minutes, a temperature gun registered the stone's surface at 770 degrees. At this temperature, our pizzas cooked in two minutes and came out with an airy crust, just-melted cheese, and fresh, pulpy tomato sauce.

2 The Grill A grilling kit and a pizza stone (see [page 79](#)) atop a grill create an ad hoc wood-fired oven. We banked our coals and wood chips to one side, let the temperature reach 775 degrees, then put in the pizza. In two minutes it emerged, its crust beautifully blistered and imbued with a kiss of smoke that's pure Naples.

THE PANTRY, [page 84](#): Where to order pizza gear, canned tomatoes, and mozzarellas.

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THE PANTRY

A Guide to Resources

In producing the stories for this issue, we discovered ingredients and information too good to keep to ourselves. Please feel free to raid our pantry!

BY KELLIE EVANS

Fare

When traveling in Pittsburgh, visit **Conflict Kitchen** for takeout and to see their current storefront (Schenley Plaza at Forbes Avenue and Schenley Drive; conflictkitchen.org). To drink our favorite Bay Area steam beers, order a bottle of **Lucky Hand Cali Common** from Beer on the Wall (\$11 for a 22-oz. bottle; 888/840-2337; beeronthewall.com); pick up **Anchor Steam** from your local Whole Foods Market (\$12 for a 6-pack; wholefoods.com). **Linden Street The 'Town** is available only at Oakland bars within biking distance from the brewery; for a list of these, contact the brewery (510/251-8898; lindenbeer.com). Buy the **Kyocera Adjustable Slicer with Ceramic Blade** from Kyocera (\$25; 800/537-0294; kyoceraadvancedceramics.com). To procure hard-to-find fruits and vegetables, contact Robert Schueller from **Melissa's Produce** (800/588-0151; melissas.com).

Cellar

To sip our favorite Viennese wines (see [page 22](#)): Order **Cobenzl Wiener Gemischter Satz Classic 2011** (\$14), **Hajszan Wiener Gemischter Satz Weissleiten 2011** (\$25), **Christ Weiner Gemischter Satz Bisamberg Alte Reben 2011** (\$35), and **Ambrositsch Wiener Gemischter Sate Sommeregg 2011** (\$58) from Chamber Street Wines (212/227-1434; chambersstwiner.com); **Wieninger Rosengartle Alte Reben 2011** is available from Saratoga Wine Exchange (\$42; 877/493-6532; saratogawine.com).

Drink

Purée, mix, or shake vacation-worthy daiquiris at home (see [page 34](#)). For the Airmail, purchase 8-year-old **Rhum Barbancourt 5 Star**, available from Total Wine & More (\$20; 855/330-6673; totalwine.com). For the Blackberry Blast, Hemingway, and original classic daiquiri, order **St. George Agua Libre**, available from K&L Wine Merchants (\$50; 877/559-4637; klwines.com). For Jasper's Jamaican, use **Appleton Estate Reserve**, available from Merwin's Liquors (\$26; 877/563-7946; shopmerwins.com) and **St. Elizabeth Allspice Dram** from DrinkUpNY (\$30; 800/658-8149; drinkupny.com). To make the Kapu Kai daiquiri, buy **Lemon Hart 151**, available from Union Square Wines & Spirits (\$35; 212/675-8100; unionsquarewines.com), and for the Pineapple Express, order **Brugal Especial** from Astor Wines & Spirits (\$21; 212/674-7500; astorwines.com).

Classic

To make the beef *rendang* recipe (see [page 36](#)), use **candlenuts**, available from importfood.com (\$5 for a 7-oz. bag; 888/618-8424), fresh or frozen **galangal**, available from Amazon (\$15 for a 14-oz. bag; amazon.com), and fresh **Kaffir lime leaves**, available from Ethnic Foods Company (\$5 for about 15 leaves; 866/331-7684; store.ethnicfoodsco.com).

Naples

Prepare Naples-style pizza dough at home (see [page 52](#)) using **Antimo Caputo Italian Superfine "00" Farina Flour**, available on Amazon (\$4 for a 2.2-lb. bag; see above).

Galilee

Buy **marzipan**, available from Nuts.com, to prepare the almond and marzipan roulade (see [page 66](#)); \$7 for an 11-oz. container; 800/558-6887). To prepare the stuffed grape leaves stuffed with rice (see [page 66](#)), use **grape leaves packed in brine**, available from Gourmet Food World (\$9 for a 1-lb. jar; 877/236-9183; gourmetfoodworld.com). For the *knafeh* recipe (see [page 67](#)), buy **kataifi, shredded phyllo dough**, available on Amazon (\$3 for a 1-lb. box; amazon.com). To prepare the grilled pita bread with *za'atar* recipe (see [page 66](#)), order **za'atar** from Kalustyan's (\$6 for a 3-oz. pack; 800/352-3451; kalustyans.com).

Sindhi

To make Sindhi recipes (see [page 76](#)) such as chickpea-flour dumplings in spiced tomato sauce, order **garbanzo bean flour** and **black mustard seeds** from Gourmet Food World (\$8 for a 2-lb. bag/\$1 for a 4-oz. bag; gourmetfoodworld.com); for the Sindhi chicken and onions recipe, use **dried fenugreek leaves**, available from Savory Spice Shop (\$7 for a 1-oz. bag; 888/677-3322; savoryspiceshop.com). To prepare the twice-fried potatoes, order **white poppy seeds** and **dried mango powder (amchur)**, from Kalustyan's (\$10 for a 3-oz. pack/\$6 for a 3-oz. pack; kalustyans.com); and for the mixed greens recipe, buy **Swad chana dal**, available on Amazon (\$4 for a 2-lb. bag; amazon.com).

Kitchen

Make pizza at home using our favorite tools (see [page 79](#)): Purchase the **Modernist Cuisine Baking Steel**, available from Modernist Cuisine (\$79; 781/826-6496; bakingsteel.com); **Exo SuperPeel**, available from Exo Products (\$55; 518/371-3173; superpeel.com); **Rosle pizza wheel**, available from Rosle (\$38; 302/326-4801; rosleusa.com); **Ceramic Chef round cooking & grilling stone** (\$48; ceramicchef.com); **4-inch pizza wheel**, available from Oxo (\$13; 800/545-4411; oxo.com); **Allied Aluminum perforated pizza peel**, available from A Best Kitchen (\$17; 888/388-9641; akitchen.com); **Kettle Pizza's Outdoor Pizza Oven Kit** (\$150; 888/205-1931; kettlepizza.com); and the **CDN Infrared Gun**, available

on Amazon (\$67; amazon.com). To purchase our favorite brands of canned tomatoes (see [page 80](#)), order **La Valle San Marzano D.O.P. Italian peeled tomatoes** and **San Marzano whole peeled tomatoes** on Amazon (\$20 for a 5-pack of 28-oz. cans/\$6 for a 28-oz. can; amazon.com); **Via Roma San Marzano Tomatoes**, contact A&P for locations (\$4 for a 28-oz. can; 866/443-7374; apfreshonline.com); **Muir Glen Organic whole peeled tomatoes** (\$8 for two 28-oz. cans; 800/832-6345; muirglen.com); **Rao's Homemade Italian peeled tomatoes** (\$14 for four 28-oz. cans; 800/466-3233; raos.com); for **Bella Terra Organic Italian Whole Peeled Tomatoes**, contact Racconto Italian Imported Foods (\$33 for twelve 28-oz. cans; 708/865-8000; racconto.com); **365 Everyday Value Whole Peeled Tomatoes**, visit a Whole Foods Market near you (\$1.50 for a 28-oz. can; wholefoodsmarket.com); to purchase **Famoso Estate San Marzano DOP Whole Plum Tomatoes**, contact Famoso Gourmet Imports (\$4.75 for a 28-oz. can; 508/824-2800); to order **La Fede D.O.P. San Marzano Italian Tomatoes**, contact La Fede (\$4 for a 28-oz. can; 973/778-5580; buylafede.com); for purchase information on **Ciao Peeled Tomatoes/Pomodori Pelati**, contact Anna Sodano at Orlando Food Service (201/368-9197; orlandofoods.com); to buy **Cento San Marzano Organic Peeled Tomatoes**, order from Amazon (\$24 for a case of four 28-oz. cans; amazon.com); to find **Academia Barilla Pomodorini Pelati**, contact Academia Barilla (\$6.50 for a 28-oz. can; 866/772-2233; shop.academiabarilla.com). To try our favorite mozzarellas (see [page 81](#)), order **Caseificio Andriese Fiordilatte** from Alma Gourmet (\$19 for a 250-gram 2-pack; 718/433-1616; almagourmet.com); and **fresh mozzarella** from Whole Foods Markets across the country (\$10 a pound; wholefoodsmarket.com). To purchase **Lioni Latticini Fresh Mozzarella**, contact Lioni Latticini, Inc. (\$9 a pound; 908/686-6061; info@lionimozzarella.com); to purchase **Via Roma Mozzarella Ball**, contact A&P to find a retailer near you (\$7 a pound; apfreshonline.com); pick up **Whole Foods Lioni Smoked Mozzarella** from Whole Foods Market (\$10 a pound; wholefoodsmarket.com); to buy **Galbani Mozzarella Fresca**, contact Lactalis Deli, Inc. to find a retailer near you (\$6 a pound; 800/699-2701); to purchase **Polly-O Whole Milk Mozzarella**, contact Kraft to find a retailer near you (\$6 a pound; 877/535-5666; kraftbrands.com); to buy **Calabro Whole Milk Mozzarella**, contact Calabro Cheese to find a retailer near you (\$7 a pound; 203/469-1311); to order **Antichi Saporì Buffalo Mozzarella**, contact Antichi Saporì Imports to find a retailer near you (\$18 a pound; 201/438-7100; calabrocheese.com); to purchase **BelGioioso Fresh Mozzarella**, contact BelGioioso to find a retailer near you (\$12 a pound; 877/863-2123; belgioioso.com); to order **Agricola Casearia Lupara Smoked Buffalo Mozzarella** or **Ovoli Buffalo Mozzarella Cheese**, contact Anna Sodano at Orlando Food Service (201/368-9197; orlandofoods.com).



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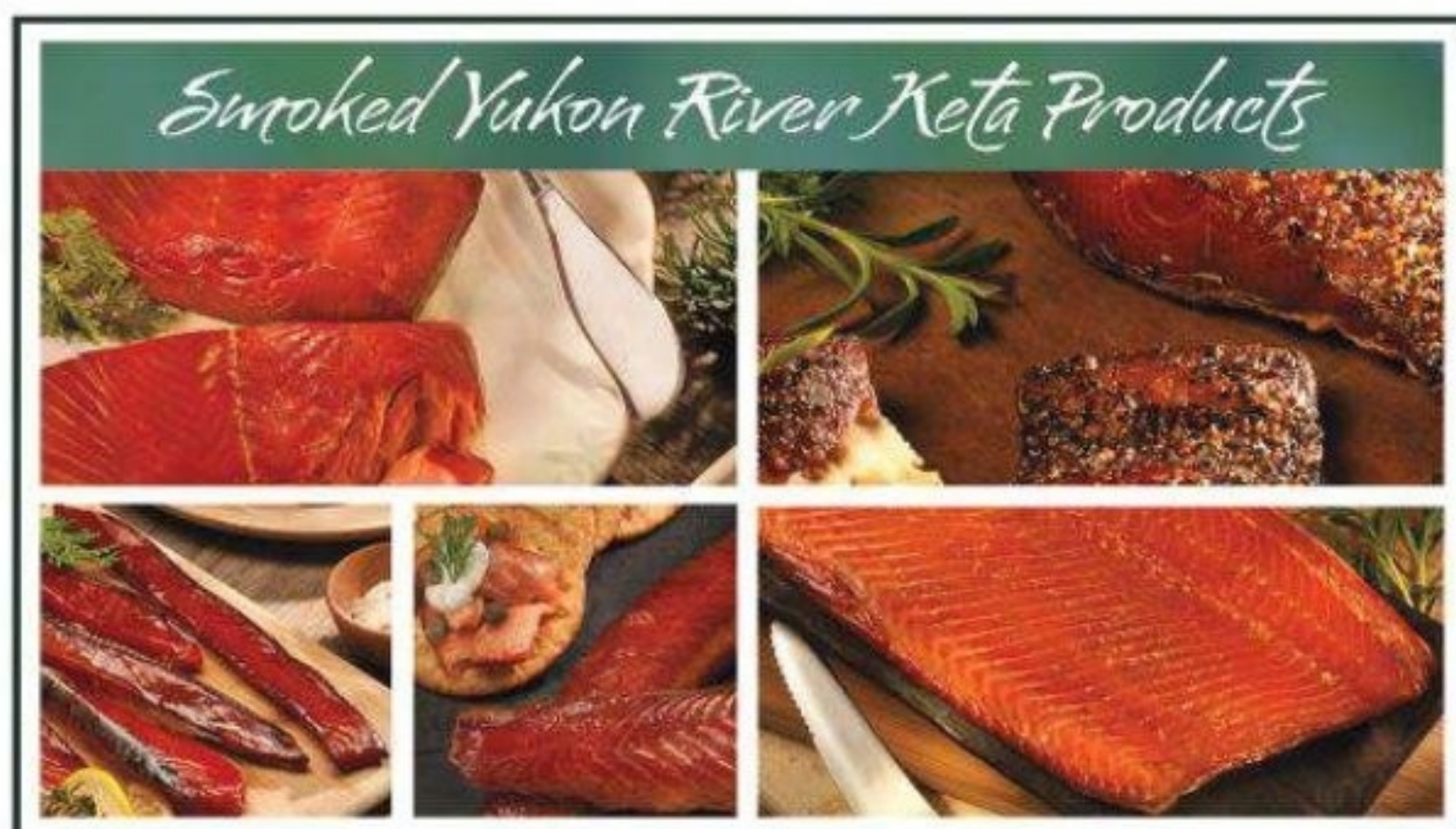


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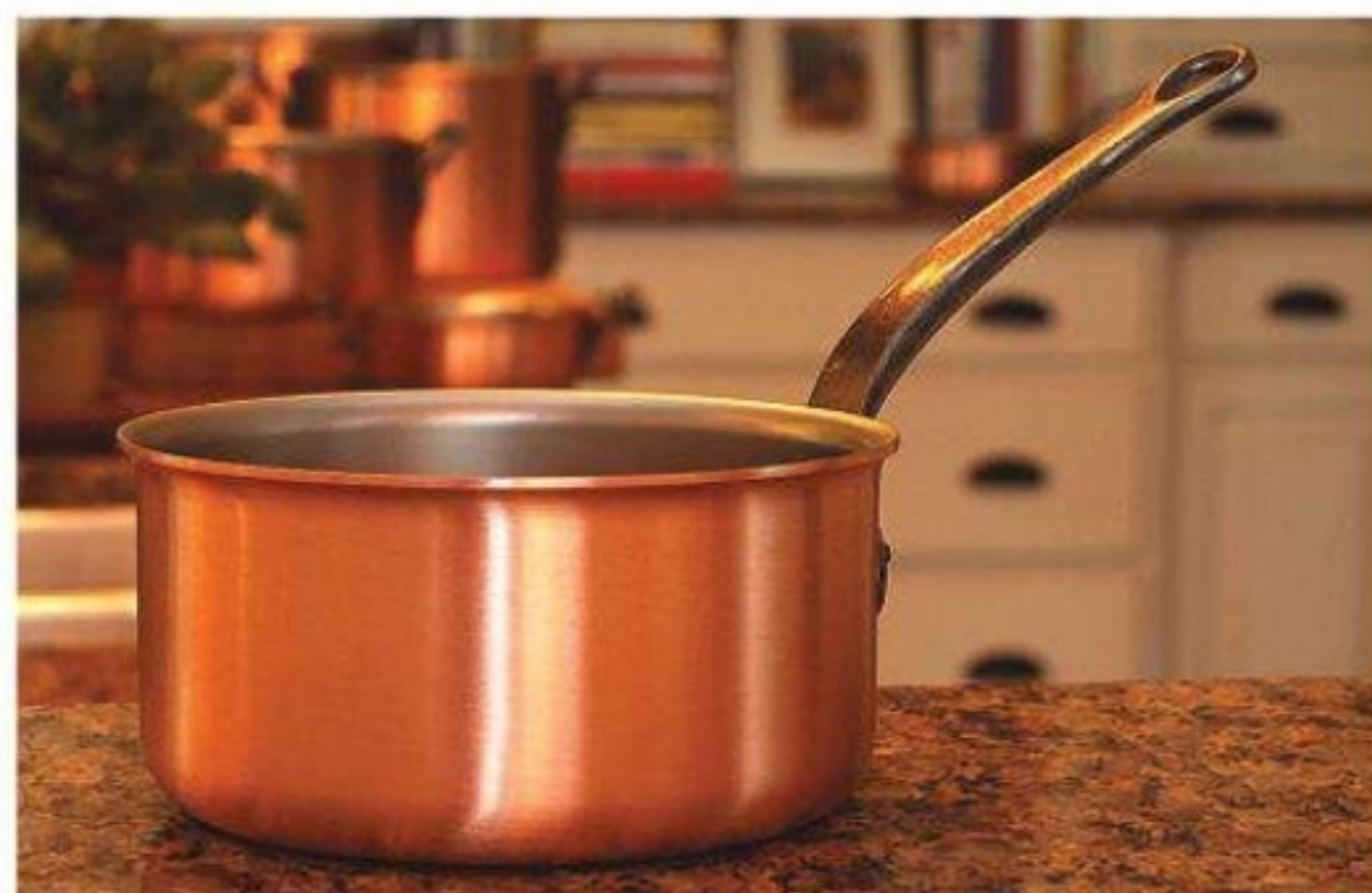


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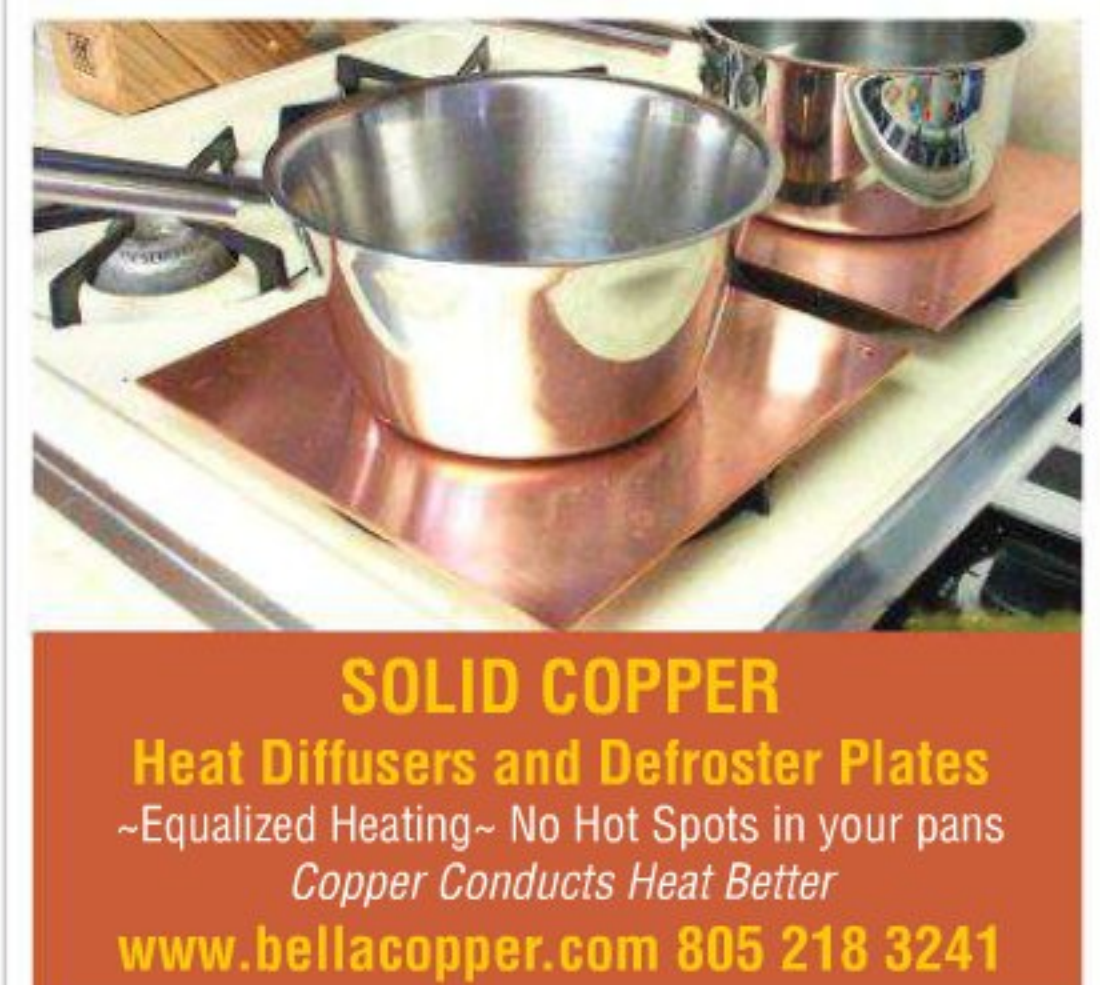
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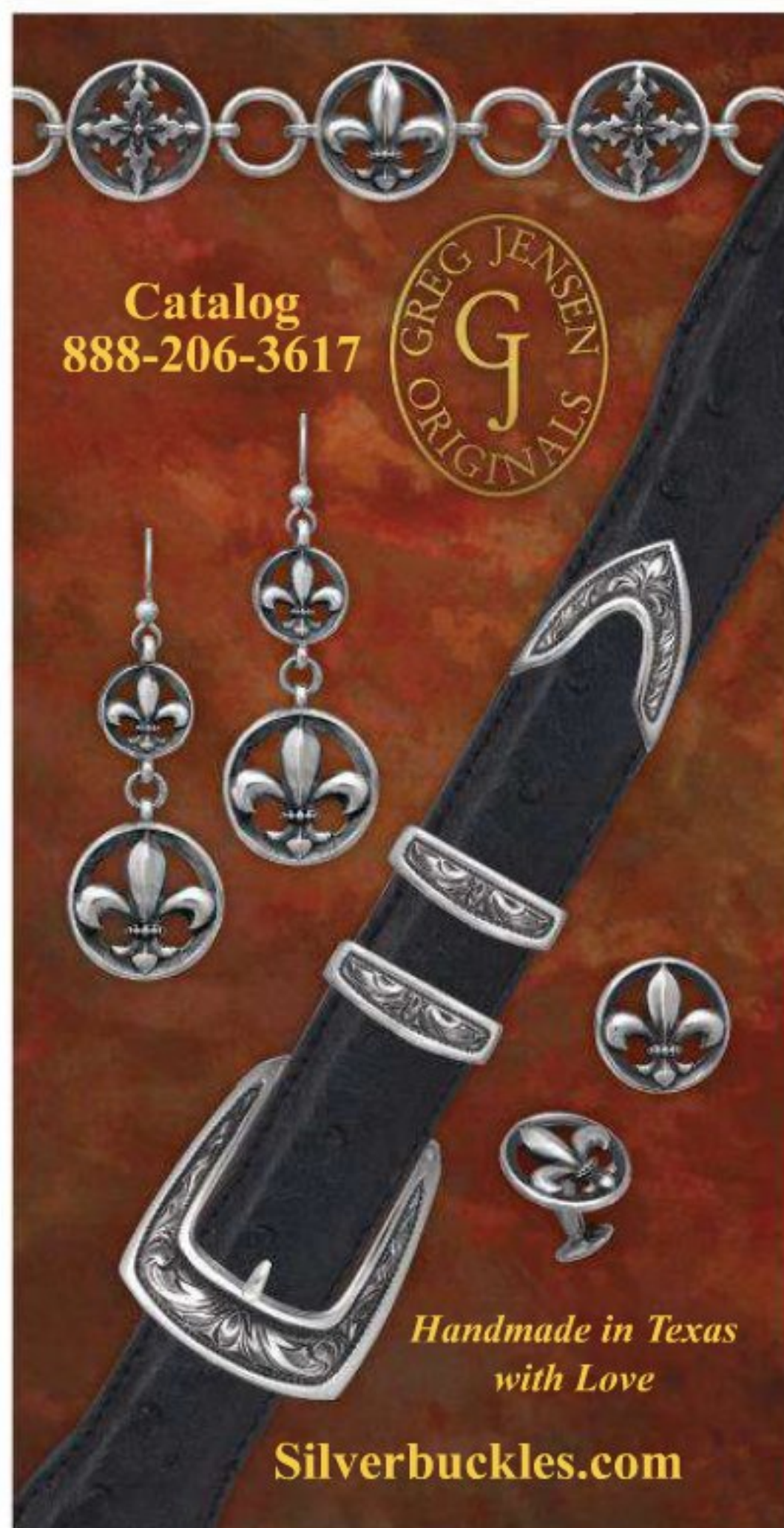
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